YES!
箱庭の日常ですっ!
問題児たちが異世界から来るそうですよ?
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Chapter 1 - A certain normal day in Little Garden

Part 1

Different Eras.

Different Worlds.

And a curious and incredible letter delivered to the trio of a teenage boy and girls who should never have had a common point of intersection in their normal lives.

And, the contents of the letter was as follow:

“Boys and girls with wondrous talents and much distress, I address thee! If you strive to test your Gifts, then cast aside your friends, your possessions, your world, and come to our Little Garden“

Instantaneously, the horizons of the trio were absurdly unfolded.

And as the situation changed sharply, they were then dropped from a location approximately 4000m above ground.

The horizon that spread before the eyes of the trio had a cliff that looked like the edge of the world.

Towards the ground, the cities were covered by a huge Veil and it caused the phenomenon that seemed to give a misleading proportion to its actual scale.

The world that they were summoned to— is a perfect other world.

Part 2

—The time was noon and the location was the streets before Little Garden's Outer Walls of Outer Gate Number 2105380.

In other words, it was at the doors, flanked with the carved stone tigers, which connected the city to the outside.

Traders who carried large backpacks and men with large frames who looked confident with their fighting abilities were walking along the street that led to the city's centre.

And a girl, who wore an extremely provocative miniskirt, stocking suspenders and a pair of rabbit ears, cried out.

"Baka! You Bakas! You…… super stupid bakas!!!"

A resounding cry that tore through the heavens.

This girl, whose usagimimi[1] were perked up in anger, was none other than the perpetuator who summoned the trio from the other worlds— Sakamaki Izayoi, Kudou Asuka and Kasukabe Yō with the invitation letters.

And currently, this girl was giving the trio a lecture.

"It hasn't been an hour since you guys set out from the City and Kuro Usagi was just thinking when would you guys be back…… Ah~ mo Really now, how did things develop to this extent…….?!"

Kuro Usagi was hugging her head in what seemed to be a headache while before her were the trio from different worlds who were pretending not to know anything.

Let's rewind the story back to an hour ago.

The setting was in the City of Little Garden, in front of the Fountain Plaza that was the neatly arranged stone paved Peribed Avenue. Izayoi and the others who were sitting in the open-air café, which had a banner of [Six Scars] flapping in the wind, had a question for Kuro Usagi's words.

"All Gift Games……. Are to be suspended? All that are in this region?"

“YES! This is really an emergency!”

Kuro Usagi perked her usagimimi as she replied.

What is known as “Gift Games” are Divine magical Games that are played within the world of Little Garden for items, “Gifts”, fortune and more. Divided into the categories of the [Host] and [Players], both groups would bet their own rewards and prizes for the sake of fortune, land, power, fame, talented individuals…… and the crystallized form of miracles which are “Gifts” in the battle.

And the hosting of “Gift Game”s were to be completely suspended.

The lad who wore a straight collared student uniform while hanging a pair of headphones around his neck—Sakamaki Izayoi, asked Kuro Usagi in a displeased tone.

“What’s this about? To stop hosting “Gift Games” would be equivalent to halting all financial transactions right? Although there appears to be trade facilitated by the use of currencies, aren’t most trades decided by the hosting of Games?”

Izayoi slightly tilted his head as he said that. Whereas the girl, who wore a red formal dress, Kudou Asuka had followed up with the conversation with a slightly anxious expression.

“Could it be…. That a Demon Lord has appeared?”

Hearing Asuka’s comment, Kuro Usagi frantically shook her head in negative.

The other girl who sat on her other side, Kasukabe Yō, stoked the Calico cat that rested on her knees as she asked with a slight tilt of her head.

“There’s a sort of anxious atmosphere on the streets. Rather than the feeling of fear, it would seem like they are troubled over something?”

{“Yeah. It feels like everyone’s running to and fro in a hurry.”}

Calico cat gave a mewing sound.

The Fountain plaza before the Peribed Avenue was normally a place which few would pass through but there were many who looked like wandering merchants who were walking about on that day and

residents were trying their best to stop these wandering merchants in their tracks so much so that it looked like they wanted to catch these people there and then. For this plaza which was usually quiet and only used by those who walked leisurely, this was a rare and curious sight indeed.

“YES! Although it isn’t a threat on the level of a Demon Lord, it is undoubtedly a situation that would make people feel troubled. Actually, it is regarding the news that the drought will be running over from the South Side of Little Garden to the East Side.”

Wha? The trio voiced their confusion.

Asuka and Yō furrowed their brows as they asked Kuro Usagi.

“……what’s that about? Is it even possible for a drought to grow a pair of hands and legs to run over here?”

“YES! To put it accurately, it is of the appearance of only an arm and leg.”

“What in the world is that strange thing?”

Asuka and Yō were only getting more confused.

But only Izayoi was surprised as he commented,

“A drought that has an arm and leg to run over….. the KanBatsu? Could it be that the [Batsu] has appeared?”[2]

“YES! As expected from Izayoi who’s so well read. To be more accurate, it is a strange bird found at the end of the genealogical tree. This strange bird has always been giving the South Side an intense heat from the Sun and it seems to have caused a fairly huge damage to the region.”

While her words drifted off with a mumble of “It really is a troubling matter”, Kuro Usagi continued with the explanations.

—The [Batsu] appears from the folklores of China and it is called the divine beast of droughts. Sharing the same bloodline as the emperor, [Batsu] is able to command the Sun and has the ability to turn away the winds and clouds.

During the battle with the Demon Lord [Chiyou], [Batsu] who had used its power was corrupted by the miasma and was unable to

return to the Heavens.

And thus many years have pass and the descendent of [Batsu] who have waited for generations to be able to return the Heavens, has gradually morphed into the appearance of this strange bird and wandered the world of Little Garden ever since.

Listening to Kuro Usagi's clarification, Izayoi was silent for a moment.

"…… [Perseus] of the Greek mythology and the [Moon Rabbit]s of the Buddhism faction, and now it is the [Batsu] of the Chinese folklore that has made its appearance. Ha, as expected of the world of Little Garden. It sure has everything."

"Well, Izayoi-san, that will be a NO for you. Be it the [Moon Rabbit]s or the [Perseus], we were all invited over from the Outside World as recognition for our achievements. Just like the term of "Blessing (Gift)", it represents the blessing that the gods have bestowed upon us! And in this situation, where the term of "descendent" is being brought up, it is equivalent to having an "achievement"!" said Kuro Usagi who had clenched her fists to make a forceful motion.

Similar in situation as the [KanBatsu], Kuro Usagi was a descendent of the [Moon Rabbit] whom Indra had summoned to Little Garden.

As a herald of Indra, one of the creators of Little Garden, the descendants of the [Moon Rabbit] were also known as the [Highborn of Little Garden].

"……Mah, although it isn't only [Batsu] who had been summoned to Little Garden for a reason like that, his presence is also assured to bring about an intense wave of sunlight and hence it makes him a pitiable eudemon whom no Community is willing to welcome. After being contaminated with the miasma, it has not only lost its Divinity but a gradual decline in its divine powers. It is so far contaminated that what little sanity within had all been gone, leaving behind a husk that is filled with the inherited longing of multiple generations to return to its former homeland……" saying that, Kuro Usagi's gaze began to drift into the distance. She was probably thinking about how there is such a lack of fairness as the strong desire over the generations have already given it the wings in the current generation despite the change in its appearance.

But a yard is a yard. They who were in the situation where the

meals of the next day are not assured would also be unable to continue with this sympathizing of others.

Kuro Usagi's expression changed as it lit up with cheer.

"We have slightly gone off-topic! Well, that goes to say the Communities within the Outer Gate 2105380 are already busily preparing for the drought! And this will be a big chance for us [No Name] to clinch a big deal!"

Kuro Usagi elatedly waved her arms.

Recognizing the underlying meaning from her words, Izayoi and the others gave a slight smile.

"I see, we have that large water source due to the possession of the [water tree]. Although we do not exactly know how much water storage the other Communities possess…… I'm guessing that most of them have not stored up enough with this sort of frantic expressions."

"Yeah, to have the water source supplied for our own use only would be much too wasteful. Taking this opportunity to secure some long term contracts with the other Communities to ensure a steady flow of income would be a good idea indeed."

"Mhm. After all, it is a little desolate to leave that huge treasure room empty."

Seeing the looks of Asuka, Yō and Izayoi who was laughing loudly, Kuro Usagi gave a wry smile as she nodded her head.

"Actually, Kuro Usagi did not want to use of this method that seems to be plundering the unfortunate, and wanted to use a legitimate method to get the contracts…… but we of [No Name] are an organization without a 'name' and 'flag' which have been stolen by a Demon Lord and there is no way for us to make a proper advertisement. If we were to show that we possess a water source in the period of drought, there should be people appearing with the desire to make a contract with us! Next up, Kuro Usagi would like you three to scout out the situation of [Batsu] and gather a bit of information about it."

Hearing that, the trio nodded their heads in acceptance of Kuro Usagi's request.

“Mah. There’s no Games in the meantime after all. Taking it as a way to pass time is also quite a nice way.”

“When we talk about collecting the information about eudemons, it is surely the realm that Kasukabe will be glad to be a part of. You must work hard okay?”[3]

“Mhm. I will reconfirm the details. It is a huge strange bird that only has an arm and leg…… am I right?”

“YES? Although it might have a difference in proportions, it is still a strange bird that is with the unique characteristic of having “different limb proportions”. If you use that sort of characteristic to search, it should be easy to locate it. Besides, he should be emitting a high body temperature at all times and it might be a good idea to search for a region where there is a heat haze[4]. …… But, please be careful. If you feel that it is dangerous at any point in time, it is alright to return immediately.”

Kuro Usagi then sent the trio from the other world off on their journey with a worried expression and they had also left towards the outskirts of the City in that fashion.

The trio were on an undercover mission to scout the information about the divine beast [Batsu] who was hiding in the neighboring region.

And after an hour since they set out,

— returning to the present.

The trio from the other world were sitting in a seiza before the stone pillar of the Outer Gate which was adorned with the stone tiger carving.

There were many people around them. In fact, it was to the extent that an unnatural crowd had been drawn around them.

Even with the large number of spectators, Kuro Usagi was furious enough to ignore their stares. A Kuro Usagi, who had her ears and long glossy hair dyed to a fiery pink, was giving the trio a lecture.

“Did, Did you listen to what Kuro Usagi said earlier?! Kuro Usagi said that it is to prepare for the drought that is about to arrive and hoped that you guys will go gather some intelligence on [Batsu]!! And this so called intelligence is on its nest whereabouts, the proportions of its body and stuff! But why!! WHY……!? Who called you guys to go defeat [Batsu]!!?”

“ “ “We just did it in a moment of rage and are in the process of reflecting upon our actions.” ” ”

“Just shut up!!!”

Pak! Pak! Pak!

Towards the trio who were apologizing without a trace of sincerity, Kuro Usagi used her paper fan to launch a lighting speed attack on them.

Yes. This is the problem. Rather than saying that the crowd were looking at the four of them, it would be more proper to say that they were looking at the prey that was brought back with them.

Lying beside them was a huge strange looking bird, around the length of twenty meters, which was strapped up.

Its two limbs were of different sizes and it was most likely the fault of having transformed into the appearance of only a single arm and leg. The body of [Batsu] which stores a great amount of heat was still creating a heat haze while unconscious.

—The divine beast [Batsu] was one that was able to control the Sun. Although it had been contaminated by the miasma and had its divine powers diminished over the generations, it is still an opponent that normal humans are unable to defeat.

But when faced with these three, all of that would be disregarded. For they were a trio who were the most unique of the special.

And Kuro Usagi had forgotten a very important thing when she asked them for this favor.

The trio from the other world whom she had summoned—- were one of the strongest problem children teams which were countable with the fingers on one hand.

Part 3

Haaaaaaahhhhhh~~~…….

After a very long sigh, Kuro Usagi had entered a lifeless state.

“Uu….. this is really depressing. And here Kuro Usagi had thought that we would be moving a big step forward to the revival of our Community….. Why in the world did you want to defeat him……?”

“Law of impermanence.”[5]

“Law of the jungle.”[6]

“The hearts of mankind”

“I say, even if you want to find an excuse, at least discuss it beforehand!”

Kuro Usagi’s ears were towering towards the sky in anger but the trio were looking in different directions and completely without the intent to spill the reason.

And since they were unable to leave [Batsu] as it is after the capture, the four made their way to the shop that would allow them to exchange it for money.

Leaving the shaded avenue of the rows of peach colored flowering trees that lined the Fountain Plaza and traveling across the bridge built across the well paved waterway, the four of them made their way to the shop that hung the banners of the twin goddess in its shop front. The store of the [Thousand Eyes] community.

Having transported the twenty meter strange bird overhead with his arms, Izayoi threw it onto the entrance with a loud sound that accompanied its fall as he smiled to greet the shop assistant.

“Change.”

“Please turn back.”

“Don’t wanna. I’m exchanging it for money.”[7]

“Please do not make ruckus about this. Our shop will not welcome

any visits from [No Name], how many times do you need me to repeat this before you understand my words?”

The female shop assistant raised her broom as she bared her fangs in an attempt to intimidate the group. And in response, the group only gave a tired shrug of their shoulders.

The group was not to be turned away by this extent of obstruction at the doorway. For the sake of the children at their Community who did not have a guarantee for food availability, the problem of exchanging goods for money here would be a matter of life and death.

Sighing secretly, Kuro Usagi took on a sinister expression as she laughed.

“Hmph Hm~~? Is it really okay to turn us back here? If your senpai in the store should scold you for that, it will not be our business you know?”

“Hmph, I thought you might say something worse. Isn’t that just a mild retort just out of frustration for being unwelcomed at the door?”

“Yeah, Kuro Usagi knows that we are being rejected at the door! But please have a look at this strange bird that we have caught! It’s only because this is the first rate trader Community, the [Thousand Eyes], that you should know the true value of this strange bird at a glance, right?”

Kuro Usagi gave a subtle smile. Suddenly, the expression of the shop assistant changed as she looked and walked towards the [Batsu] which she did not even give a glance from before. And she lifted her brows to take a closer look.

With each feather the size of an average human’s head and emitting a warm wind that wafted towards the four standing at the door.

Suddenly, the expression of the shop assistant changed.

“…… A descendent of [Batsu]? No, No way. The Community of the lowest level to actually have this standard of strength,”

“No, No, please be more confident about your eyes will you? This huge strange bird is the topic of the streets, the reason for the drought! The divine beast [Batsu] who commands the Sunlight!”

HngHng～, Kuro Usgi puffed her chest as she perked her ears.

“[Batsu] who can generate heat for eternity can become the most important and valuable source of energy for a Community if it is processed well. And that is something that everyone knows! In this lower levels, there are still many new Communities who are using the method of generating heat from firewood. There should be many who would offer a high price for this, you know?”

“……Yeah, I guess that’s true. But is that [Batsu] really caught by you guys?”

The female shop assistant cast a doubtful gaze at Izayoi and the others.

Understanding the intentions of Kuro Usagi, Izayoi gave a proud grin as he nodded his head.

“What’s wrong? It’s not like it is a big deal. It just seems like the drought is giving the other Communities a headache and we just thought that we should take it upon ourselves to help rid of the problem. It’s just like that only.”

“Hmph…… That is quite a heart-warming ambition coming from a [No Name]. It would also be a problem if it were to be left lying unattended. God knows how many Communities would be willing to bring in their high bids and various Gift Games for it.”

“The hearts of mankind, you should remember that well. Seeing people in trouble makes you want to reach out a helping hand.”

Izayoi gave a dubious loud laughter and the female shop assistant continued to shoot him a doubtful look.

However, putting aside the truth of the matter for now, this situation would mean that there is no need to continue worrying about the drought.

And this was also an advantageous situation to [Thousand Eyes].

Reluctant but hapless about the offer, the female shop assistant gave a sigh and lifted the door flaps to the shop interior.

“Mah, I will just take this as a special exception. The protection of the peace in the lower levels is supposed to be the responsibility of our shop owner. If the pretext is to have you guys as her agents

tasked with the support for our job, I doubt anyone would have any opinion about your stepping foot into the shop.”

“Sorry about that, we have troubled you.”

“That’s absolutely right. …… Please wait here for a moment. I will get the shop’s appraiser over.”

Just like that, the female shop assistant tucked the bamboo broom under her arm as she walked into the shop.

Seeming to have a weight lifted from her shoulders, Kuro Usagi relaxed her shoulders and turned to the problem children trio.

“That was a perfect assist! Izayoi-san.”

“Actually, I wasn’t telling a lie. Am I right, Ojou-sama?”

“Is that so? I kind of felt that a part was definitely a fib. Kasukabe-san, what’s your take?”

“Mhm～……But the rest of it were the truth right?”

Yeah, seems like it. The problem children exchanged a look as they bit back their wry smiles.

Part 4

When the group of four were on their way back from the shop, the buildings in the Community were already dyed with the hues of the setting sun.

The problem children then made a beeline for the residential area.

Whereas Kuro Usagi had gone straight to the location of the leader, Jin Russel's residence, to make the final confirmations on the order list of inventory and food that is to be placed with [Thousand Eyes].

And running from the Great Hall to welcome them was one from the Senior Group, a girl with kitsunemimi[8] and sporting a Japanese style apron.

The fox girl was full of smiles as she greeted Izayoi and the others.

"Welcome back, Izayoi-sama, Yō-sama ……eh? Where's Asuka-sama?"

Bounding over energetically, the fox girl looked all over for Asuka.

Izayoi and Yō gave a slight shrug of their shoulders as they explained.

"She headed off to the baths first saying that she has sweated a lot."

"It must have been the stuffiness from being close to the [Batsu]. Come to think about it, it sure is a great thing that [Thousand Eyes] is willing to buy it from us."

"Buy it……? Ah! I see! So it's like that! Thank you for your hard work!"

Energetically perking up her kitsunemimi, that was an easily understood response from one who had much expectations for the performance of Izayoi and the others. But, seeming to feel that her thoughts were much too realistic, her kitsunemimi were awash with a colouration of crimson as they tilted down.

Regarding those ears that make it easy to understand the multitude of expressions, Izayoi and Yō could only exchange a wry smile.

“Don’t worry. We have caught a big prey this time so we will be able to have no worries about our food shortages for a while.”

“We have already placed a big order on ingredients from [Thousand Eyes] and it will be delivered the next day. So, we will be troubling you with the receiving of the order and the management for their storage areas.”

“Ye, Yes! Understood! Then, what are your plans? If you would like to have your meal, I can start the cooking preparations right away.”

“No, I will be waiting for Ojou-sama to have her bath first before eating together. What about you, Kasukabe?”

“I…… Uu.”

Her words suddenly trailed off abruptly.

Yō, who was staring fixatedly at the kitchen, tilted her head slightly to ask.

“That is quite a nostalgic fragrance. Could it be the smell of the lye extraction from the ashes of bamboo shoots?”[9]

Aye? After Yō’s words hit the mark, the fox girl was frozen on the spot.

“Eeh, About that,…… Ye, Yes it is. Hearing Yō-sama mutter something about “I really miss Japanese seafood cuisines”…… so I wanted to give you a surprise and made many many preparations.”[10]

“Yeah?!”

Thinking “Gosh, I screwed up!”, Yō had a bitter expression as she looked aside.

Because of the superior sense of smell that Yō possessed when compared to the common man, it was no wonder that she was able to tell what was going on in the kitchen.

The Gift that she possessed, the [Genome Tree], was one that gives her the ability to communicate with dogs, cats, dolphins, bats and many other types of animals. And if there is a connection forged between them, it would grant her the abilities of the animals. Among them are the abilities carried by eudemon types such as the

Gryphons.

It seems like she had just burst the surprise for herself and the atmosphere was really awkward then.

Unable to watch this situation any further, Izayoi gave a slight shrug of his shoulders and offered a helping hand.

“So, what would be the key dish in the menu?”

“Ye, Yes. Because of the ingredients of some quality tender chicken meat, bamboo shoots and some wild mountain vegetables, I thought of making a tempura out of them. Removing the lye slightly from the freshly gathered bamboo shoots, it then brings out the fresh sweetness of the bamboo shoots. Using these bamboo shoots for the tempura and adding a little salt to taste will couple it with the sweet fragrance of spring in its taste……. Ah, there’s also the other vegetables gathered from the small garden in the backyard that is used to fill it with the essence of vegetables—“

“Sorry Izayoi, I will be digging in first.”

“Don’t mind me for I will start first as well. …… Come to think about it, is there some spare bamboo shoots that are not used for the dishes? If there’s some leftovers, I would like to order Takenoko Gohan[11].”

“Ah, That’s a good idea. May we trouble you with that?”

“Ye, Yes! I will make the preparations immediately!”

Seeing their understanding response, the fox girl naturally relaxed herself and became cheerful.

Pitter Pattering her two tails, she seemed to be in a very good mood as she returned to the kitchen to start the dinner preparations.

Part 5

On the other hand, Kuro Usagi was giving loud sighs as she sat in Jin's office which was located in another block. Jin had left to check on their warehouse to reconfirm the quantities of the inventory after looking through the order list.

Whereas Kuro Usagi, who was waiting for Jin's return, seemed to have lost all her motivation as she slumped into the chair and allowed her head to hang on the back of the chair.

Although the transaction of [Batsu] did make their coffers a little plumper, the Community that they ran was one that housed a hundred and twenty young boys and girls. It would require a stable source of income if they were to be raised in the Community.

The girl, who was dressed up like a maid, sat down beside and consoled the depressed Kuro Usagi who was dispirited after the loss of their rare opportunity.

"Don't be so glum. Trading with the water resource isn't the one and only method that we have."

"Well, you may say that…… Then, what better suggestion can Leticia-sama give?" Kuro Usagi asked as she slightly lifted her head.

Leticia's soft and silken hair shone like strands of gold as they lightly brushed across Kuro Usagi's nose.

Appearing to be around the age of a twelve or thirteen year old, this maid costume that she wore was adorned with a lovely lotus leaf patterned lace. If one were to look at it from the objective perspective of the role of a maid, no matter how polite one may be, it is too much to call this clothing a suitable dressing for that kind of job.

But it could not be more suited for her when she wore it.

A dainty height coupled with a head of splendid long and flowing blonde hair and a gentle beautiful appearance. Although it may look like a strange outfit for a maid costume at first glance, it did look very good on her. Compared to the focus on the functionality of clothes, it was clear that the master had placed the focus on the aesthetic aspect of the clothes. Regarding that point, it shows the

serious attitude of Leticia about her job.

And this serious girl was now revealing a mischievous smile like the foreboding of a prank as she slightly tilted her head to ask Kuro Usagi.

“Ara, I’m just a lowly servant who do not have the position to talk. When in the face of the Community’s strategist, and one who is known as the [Highborn of Little Garden], it would really be out of place for me to bring up any suggestion before Kuro Usagi-Ojou-sama……”

“Uu…… please don’t say that. Please do share with me your knowledge.”

Seeing Kuro Usagi say such spineless words, Leticia gave a shrug of her shoulders in slight irritation.

“Mhm…… To increase the strength of our Community, what we would need is to increase our savings. You do know that much right?”

“YES. But currently, our Community does not have any excess savings……”

“Well, that’s true. Although goshuujin-samas have done well, currently it would seem that it has only reached an equilibrium and there’s nothing for us to talk about savings.—Then, why is that so? Is it because of the hundred and twenty members who are incapable of contributing much to the Community? Am I right?”

Kuro Usagi’s expression was frozen for a moment.

Because that was something that she knew all too well and it was the reality that she wanted to avoid all these while.

However, Leticia had a cold and unforgiving look that was unthinkable from her usual self as she continued to press the matter.

“As I’ve mentioned earlier, goshuujin-samas have done a very good job. Ever since their arrival to this world of Little Garden, they have been gaining victories in games in a consecutive manner. Yet the living standards of this Community did not have any visible signs of improvement. And why is that so? Because we are an organization riddled with liabilities. And the biggest liabilities in the

Community…… are these children. Am I wrong to say that?"

"…… ."

The Kuro Usagi gradually became expressionless as she started to stare hard into Leticia's eyes. For the sake of reading the real intention behind those words, she continued to search for the answers in the depths of those wine red irises.

If the real intention behind those words were to abandon the liabilities…… That would absolutely not sit well with her.

—Normally speaking, the human resources to support everyday life in the Community could be divided into two major groups.

The first would be those who are specialized in and responsible for taking part in Gift Games and the earning of Gifts like the [Water Tree] or even monetary rewards among others. Talents who support the Community, such as Izayoi, a Game Player.

The second type would be the support group who would help in the other aspects of life to allow the Game Players to be able to enter the competitions in their peak conditions. The children in the Community were only able to enjoy the same Gifts that were earned from rewards through the work that they have done to help Izayoi and the others in the aspects of food preparation, sweeping and cleanliness of the place and caring for their every aspect of living.

But the structure of these human resources in the Community of [No Name] was fairly unbalanced. The former only consisted of three people and the latter was a group of over a hundred and twenty individuals. If compared to Izayoi and the others who needed to spend their mornings in competitions, the jobs of these children would only be to prepare the meals, wash the clothes, sweeping, other similar tasks and no other.

"…… ……"

The hundred and twenty children were the liability of this Community. Kuro Usagi could only lower her head and turn away her gaze as she could not find any way to retort to Leticia's words. In fact, that was something that she thought of as well. Even for the [Batsu] incident today, it was supposed to be a reward that belonged to Izayoi and gang without the need to share with others. Even if the situation was not one that followed the plan, there should not have been any grounds for her to remark upon the act.

However, they had been uncomplainingly contributing their all to the Community— and that could only be said to be their act of kindness.

The more she thought about it, the more it pained her heart and her Usagimimi drooped as she looked more depressed than before.

Giving Kuro Usagi a sidelong glance, Leticia sighed as she looked to the skies.

“Try to come up with a plan to help these liabilities become a resource for the Community. If we can do that, our Community will definitely be able to make progress. …… This is something that those children strongly wish for as well.”

“Yi?”

Kuro Usagi lifted her head in surprise.

Leticia was looking at Kuro Usagi with a warm and gentle smile.

“This is something that happened this afternoon. After the preparation of lunch earlier in the day, the children of the Senior group have come to me to discuss about this matter

“ —Ever since Izayoi-sama and Asuka-sama arrived, we were able to get our fill every day. Moreover, we also have sufficient water from the water source that removes the need for us to fetch water from the faraway river. ……But we are now unable to complete our duties to this Community. Are there any other good ideas for us—?”

like that. Those children must have been aware of this situation when they make that sort of plea and they seem to have given it much thought before coming to me with those serious expressions, you know?”

“ Is……Is that so?”

Kuro Usagi blinked her eyes in surprise.

Perhaps it was her recent hurrying around after the arrival of Izayoi and the others, Kuro Usagi did not have a good chance to properly speak with the children. Not knowing that the children were actually carrying that same sort of guilt was unexpected.

Seeing Kuro Usagi’s look, Leticia gave a laugh as she continued.

“Indeed. If only we were able to clinch the deal of the sale of water, there would definitely be a steady inflow of income. But there needs to be a better plan for the efficient allocation of resources. Although they might still be children, but they are still a hundred and twenty strong. To include all the members and resources to search for the way that will bring out the greatest value is a task of yours. Am I wrong, Kuro Usagi?”

Listening to Leticia’s counsel, it struck a chord within Kuro Usagi’s heart.

“A way to utilize the water and children…… not just for minor house chores but to offer them a productive task……”

For Kuro Usagi who had supported this Community by herself for the duration of the last three years, this was a suggestion that she had not thought of before. This is because in the eyes of Kuro Usagi, these children were not comrades who supported the Community but were individuals to be protected and cared for. However, in the interval of three years after the attack of the Demon Lord, the Senior Group of the children are already at the age of ten.

For the sake of supporting their Community—Perhaps the day for them to play a part has finally arrived.

The drooping Usagimimi suddenly perked up with a *Pi!* as Kuro Usagi thanked Leticia with renewed spirits.

“Thank you so much! I’m finally able to see the way forward all thanks to your words.”

“Is it so? That’s great to hear.”

“Yeah～ …….And, Kuro Usagi’s really sorry for having to rely on you so much. Even though they might have destroyed the original plan when they defeated the [Batsu], it does not change the fact that they have brought a huge benefit to the Community. It would seem that Kuro Usagi has done a very impolite thing to Izayoi and the others…….”

“I guess that is so. Even with your closest comrades, one still has to pay attention to politeness. When you remember of it, please do apologize to them. …… Well, coming to think about it, for goshuujin-samas to defeat [Batsu], I wonder what could be the reason behind it. It just doesn’t seem to be their usual way of doing things.”

Ara? The both of them tilted their heads as they exchanged a look.

At this moment, there was a sound of frantic running along the corridor.

With a “Bang!”, Jin swung open the door in a hurry.

“Kuro, Kuro Usagi!! This is bad, please come quickly!!”

“Jin, Jin-bocchan? Has something happened?”

Running over in a hurry was the young leader Jin Russel, and before he could even have a moment to catch his breath, he pulled Kuro Usagi’s hand, “It is impossible with me alone! Anyways, just come with me and help me with the translations!”

“Is, Is this about translating?!”

Things were getting more confusing by the moment.

And while Kuro Usagi was still in her state of confusion, Jin pulled her hand as they ran down the stairs.

Arriving at the entrance of another building, Kuro Usagi finally understood the situation with just a glance at their guest.

“Ah! You…. Are that unicorn whom I met before, am I right?”

{“Yes, that’s me. It’s been a while, [Moon Rabbit].”}

Yes. The one who visited the territory of the [No Name] is the Eudemon whom she had met during the time when she had been chasing after Izayoi.

A body covered in a beautiful bluish white gloss and the lone horn that stems from the forehead. This is a horse that is commonly known as the unicorn.

“This is really surprising……! Not only seeing a unicorn in the East Side but appearing in a human inhabited region?! Just the news of your herd leaving the South Side is already very strange…… Well, because we are in this outlying building, we are unable to offer you much for a warm welcome. If we were at the main building, we do have a special guest room for entertaining Eudemon type guests! If it is convenient for you, we can go over…”

{“No, please do not stand on ceremony with me. Because I’m just

here to offer my gratitude. ….. Sorry about this, but could you help me take down the bundle on my back?”}

The unicorn used his nose to point to his back. In the sack, which seemed like a saddle on his back, was only one item. After unbuttoning the sack, Jin carefully retrieved the sack from his back and laid it out on the ground.

Upon seeing the object, Kuro Usagi and Jin were unable to contain their surprise.

“Could this be…. The horn of a Unicorn?!”

{“That’s right. I hope to gift it to you guys.”}

“How can that be?!! We cannot accept such a valuable gift!! Moreover, you are of the unicorns and to give a horn of your kind as a gift…… that is something that is completely unheard of!!”

Kuro Usagi couldn’t help it as her mind was thrown into confusion once more. This also told of how unusual the situation was.

—When one talks about the Unicorn’s horn, it is a very famous heirloom which has the properties of cleansing and curing of wounds. And in this world of Little Garden, there have been records of unicorn hunting as many humans wanted to get their hands on the horns.

This history is also the reason for their surprise when they spotted a unicorn who has entered the territory inhabited by Man.

Needless to say, the gifting of a unicorn’s remains to an outsider is something that is unheard of.

{“It is understandable that you are surprised to that extent. But your comrades have performed a deed worthy for this horn of mine to be bestowed to you. Not only did they save my life today—they have also avenged my kind by defeated the demonic beast [Batsu] who is also our nemesis! With that, it can be said that it is undoubtedly an avenging for the regrets of my fallen comrades! As a representative for all the South Side residents who have suffered greatly under the drought, I hope that you will accept this gift that represents our deepest thanks…..!”}

The voice of the unicorn was earnest and filled with gratitude.

But Kuro Usagi's reaction was one of incomparable surprise.

" Could it be…… that the reason for Izayoi-san and the others to have defeated the [Batsu] is to save you……?"

{"Yes, you are right about that. Aiya, they really are exceptional humans. Just remembering that sight is enough to make my blood boil in excitement! Although it is said to be corrupted by miasma and having its divinity corroded away, it is still a descendant of a Divine Beast. —But with just a hit! It was sent sprawling in just a hit! If I were to put it myself, it sure is expected of the comrades of [Moon Rabbit]. It really is a hit that makes one feel the palpitations of joy……!!!"}

The unicorn's breathing started to become irregular as it grew more excited with its recount. But it did tell of the flow of events that led up to the situation.

—It is said that the [Batsu] had been resting in the South Side of the world of Little Garden previously.

Water shortage had struck due to the intense heat of the sun and it brought a destructive disaster to many plants and organisms in the South Side. Especially for the unicorns who live near the waters, this was a matter of life and death Not only were their habitats continuously destroyed but a good portion of their comrades had also lost their lives due to it.

Although the Unicorns were a race that were courageous and proficient in battles, their opponent was able to take to the skies and the difference in their compatibility was seriously too great. Comrades who have gone to face it to meet out its punishment have also returned with only a handful of feathers.

Just when they were about to be wiped out, a passing magi general had chased the [Batsu] out of the South Side and saved them from the impending extinction of their kind.

{"As we heard of a Herald, a water god, residing in the East Side Outer Gate Number 2105380, I set out hither to obtain a Gift from it. The serpent god who resides in the nearby Tunisia Falls is rather famous by the way."}

"I, I see. So that is why we met in that place."

{"Yes. But you guys have beaten me to the completion of the

challenge hosted by the serpent god. Even so, the serpent god who learnt of my situation had referred me to a challenge offered by the neighboring water faeries. Thanks to that, I've also successfully obtained a Gift."}

"That is great news."

Kuro Usagi massaged her chest as she felt relieved.

But the Unicorn suddenly dropped its volume by a bit at this point.

{"But on my journey to return to my homeland.— I discovered the enemy of my race! I did not know that the [Batsu] had been driven to the East Side nor did I expect to meet it! What came next was a blur as the blood rushed to my head to chase after it. We of the Unicorn race are quite spirited and will not stop when our hearts are ablaze!"}

"……"

Although it sounded like something said in a jokingly tone, Kuro Usagi was able to relate to his feelings.

If she had been the one who met the Demon Lord who was her enemy…… she would definitely charge at it without a second thought as well.

{"AiyaAiya…… It was a really shameful sight then. Not only did I not succeed in my avenging strike, but I found myself slowly retreating when I came to my senses. Because my heart was telling me persistently that I must get the Gift bestowed by the water faeries back to my homeland but at the moment when my mind calmed down enough to think of that, it was already too late. Just as he was about to rend me with his claws— your comrades had saved my life from the fate of his claws in the nick of time……!"}

It really was a situation that could be said to be happening in a split moment.

In the moment that the huge hooked claw was about to strike from the skies on the Unicorn who had left the city, travelled the hills and woods in his journey for the Gift, Kudou Asuka had shouted these words to the [Batsu].

"Stop it right now!"

Needless to say, the movements of the [Batsu] had suddenly frozen in its act.

Not missing this moment, Kasukabe Yō immediately whipped up a whirlwind to send Izayoi into the air.

“We will be leaving the rest to you, Izayoi.”

“Leave it to me then!!!”

Laughing a “Yahohoho!” as he soared through the sky with a somersault, he landed a roundhouse kick on the [Batsu]. And being unable to withstand that force, the [Batsu] crumpled to the ground.

{“Aiya……that was really spectacular. Although it was shameful that I had turned tail at that moment, it was still a sight that made my heart sing in joy! Really…. I’m really grateful to you guys.”}

The Unicorn gave a deep bow.

Completely frozen in her spot, Kuro Usagi also hung her head for some strange reason.

{“This horn is horn is a relic left behind by one of our fallen comrades who failed in their challenge against the [Batsu]. Originally, it is an item that is prepared for the negotiations if I failed in my Gift Game…… But if it is given to you guys, I will think it to be more than fitting for this end. I would like to trouble you to accept this token of mine.”}

“…… I understand the whole story now and I will pass this horn over to Izayoi and the others. Please be careful on your way back as well.”

After passing his comrade’s horn to Kuro Usagi, the Unicorn turned to leave.

But suddenly seeming to remember something, he turned his head back to ask, {“Aahh, right. There’s another thing that I would like to ask about.”}

“And what would that be?”

{“I heard that your Community is spreading the word of “Defeating Demon Lords” as you carry out your activities. Is that true?”}

In a flash, Kuro Usagi swallowed back her words.

Slightly giving a glance at Jin's expression, she then puffed her chest and lifted her head to reply to the question,

" —YES! Not only pertaining to the Demon Lord themselves but also the problems that are caused by them. We will accept them all, you know?"

{"Hoho……I see, it sure sounds dependable! Compared to the reality that you guys are [No Name]s, your ambitions are strong enough to carve its mark into my heart. If it is possible for you guys, please come and attend the Gift game contests that will be hosted by the South Side's Harvest Festival in two months. Although the Unicorns are still in the process of recovering and are unable to attend the festival, but our Community, the [One Horn] will surely welcome you!"}

Saying that, the unicorn gave a loud neigh before leaving the [No Name] territory.

Part 6

Returning to the duty office with Jin, Kuro Usagi related the whole story to Leticia and showed her the horn of the Unicorn. While Leticia looked at the precious horn that was around a meter in length, she nodded her head, seemingly in admiration, as she commented.

“I see…… Hoho, it sure is the usual style of goshuujin-samas. Not telling us their reasons is just part of their shyness right? Or perhaps it is the trouble of giving an excuse when the unicorn clearly turned tail.”

“But, But if they did tell it to me properly, I would also be receptive to their actions.”

Kuro Usagi said with a slight pout.

But her heart was thinking differently. Kuro Usagi stroked the horn while she thought of Izayoi and the others ever since their first meeting.

“Come to think about it, although Izayoi-san and the others are indeed problem children…… but the problems that they cause are all things that can be laughed off as pranks. This matter is clearly different from their usual style. Kuro Usagi should have realized that there must be some sort of unusual reason behind it from the start……”

“You are right about that. Although they did give various excuses, they are fundamentally honest people. …… Although we cannot deny that they can be quite sour about things at times too.”

Exchanging a glance, the both of them giggled.

“Coming back to the topic, we heard it from Unicorn-sama just now that the South Side will be hosting a Harvest Festival with the hosting of a Gift Game contest in two months’ time.”

“Ho……The Harvest Festival of the South Side? Fufu, that sure is a nostalgic memory.”

“Leticia-sama has participated in it before?”

“Yeap. It gathers many people of various Races and Communities. The memory of everybody being noisy and lively in the crowd is something that I remember clearly.”

Leticia had a faraway gaze and it would seem that she had lapsed into her memory of her participation with her former comrades.

Hearing those words, Kuro Usagi was partially excited and regretful as she sighed.

“Is that so…… Although we were invited to join the Festival, it would be difficult for us to get there without saving up the sum for the passage fees. If we were to get over there with the normal means, it will really be a ve～～～ry far place.”

“Hoho, that is right as well. But the Harvest Festival of the South side is really fun. There will be famous Earth gods and faerie Communities who will bring their cultivated seeds to that region—”

The conversation broke off unnaturally at that point and the both of them held their breaths.

“The harvest of the Community…… right. Kuro Usagi, what’s the condition of our Community’s agricultural sector?!”

“The soil itself is plenty messed up by the attack of the Demon Lord three years ago but the land is still there! If we are able to recruit a famous Earth god from the Harvest Festival, we might be able to revive the land!”

If the lands were revived, the children would also be able to help out with the fields. There will also be a new use for the bountiful water supply. And if the Community were to be able to build its own system of self-sufficiency, the matter about increasing the savings will no longer be a dream as well.

But upon remembering the words that came from her mouth, Kuro Usagi bowed her head as she became deflated.

“Ah……But, there’s the problem about the journey fee,”

“We will tighten up from the food expenses.”

It was said by Jin who was confirming the quantities within the inventory lists and the orders had suddenly interjected their conversation.

Though he might not know the full contents of their conversation, but he must have understood the nuance within their words.

Placing the documents aside, Jin lifted his head to look at the duo as he gave a suggestion.

“If we do not have enough for the journey expenses, then we will start with the cut backs on our comrades’ living expenses for food. If we cut back on our food consumption by 30% on a daily basis and judging by the average rate of earnings from Izayoi and the others, it would probably take two months to raise the amount needed for a group of six to depart on the journey. ……Ah, But it will probably be just enough for the journey. If we want to be sure about the success of this plan, it would probably be safer to cut it back by 40%. And considering that we must prioritize the food amounts of Izayoi and the others to have it at the usual amounts, I will run a recalculation on the inventories.”

“Bu, But if it is at 40%, it is almost a reduction by half isn’t it?”

“Hoho, isn’t that great? This is a really good suggestion too.”

A worried Kuro Usagi and an approving Leticia.

Jin nodded his head vigorously as he replied.

“Mhm. I will take the task of telling everyone about these changes. Moreover, we are all accustomed to starving and it should not be much to worry about. It is just for the duration of two months. It’s going to be a breeze. Moreover, if it is Izayoi and the others,…… they will surely reap the reward of bringing the lands a complete revival.”

Jin clenched his fists tightly as he said that.

The duo exchanged a look before starting the planning for the course of their futures.

“Then, it is not only about the food expenses. We must also pay attention to prevent the incurring of any unnecessary expenses. Leticia-sama can also use your position as a maid to direct the Senior children on their task.”

“Got it. Kuro Usagi, I would like to go ascertain the situation of the farmland first, so come along with me later.”

“YES! I understand!”

Kuro Usagi gave a thumbs up and the underlying tone of worry was gone from her voice.

Having clearly marked out their course for the Community, her spirits also seemed to have a boost.

“Aahh, right, regarding the matter about the food expenses, do keep it a secret from Izayoi and the others, okay? If they were to know of it, they would surely say “Really, now. Don’t mind such minor and boring stuff.” Or something along those lines.”

“I really can’t figure out if it is just a matter of having a lofty pride or just a side of their gentle kindness…… Having people who do not ask for any privileges in this sort of place. If we want it to work out nicely, it seems better to keep it a secret then.”

“Mhm. If we were to anger them, it might just become horrifying.”

The trio exchanged a bitter smile.[12]

With that, the secret saving plan for the journey to the upcoming Harvest Festival was launched. For the long term goal of the plantation’s revival, the young leader, the immature strategist and the maid reaffirmed their determinations for the goal of reviving the Community.

Part 7

—The next day morning.

Kuro Usagi and the problem children arrived at the Outer Gate of 2105380 where she was brimming with smiles as she addressed them.

“Well then, everyone, the hosting of Gift Games have completely resumed as per normal! Everyone must give their all for the Games, okay?”

“Well, it isn’t much of a big deal, but are you sure that this will be an interesting Game?”

“YES! It is a Community that has come to this region for commercial purposes, the sub division of [Yaoyorozu no Kami] and they are currently hosting a contest too!” Kuro Usagi replied.

This time, it was Izayoi’s turn to use an admiring tone to mutter.

“…… Buddhism, the mythologies of the Greek gods, mythologies of China and now the gods of the Shinto faction.

“This sure seems to be much less in momentum when compared to Japan’s new year and year end festivities. Come to think about it, since it is the Yaoyorozu no Kami, it would be something about the Omikami right? Oi!”[13]

“HngHng, we will know that later! No matter what the case is, the [Yaoyorozu no Kami] is a super large scale Community that can match up to the [Thousand Eyes]! The degree of anticipation can be much larger when compared to the previous ones, you know?”

“Is that so? Mah, we were talking about the degree of anticipation, and it really is on a super scale?”

“Although it is really vague about which event you were comparing our anticipation for, it does sound quite hopeful.”

Kuro Usagi, who was slightly frustrated by the merciless comment of Asuka and Yō, perked her Usagimimi as she did not want to lose from just that.

“Well then, let’s go! The Gift Games are games for the gods and the demons! It will surely have many miracles and Gifts that will be prepared to satisfy your desires!”

Saying that, Kuro Usagi made a twirl on the spot and her skirt fluttered with her movements as she gave a bright smile.

—Yes. This is the world of Little Garden where the gods reside. If one wanted a miracle, they would just need to obtain victory.

With the goals of reviving their destroyed Community and the defeat of the Demon Lords carried within their hearts, they continue to travel to the battlefield of Gift Games today.

Chapter 2 - Finding the answer to the Golden Plate Mystery

Part 1

—[No Name] Community grounds. Resting shed that faced the reservoir.

Leaves of the Water Tree rustled softly as a cool spring breeze lightly brushed them in passing.

The small shack was situated in the corner of the path that connected the reservoir to the small overgrown forest. And within the small shack, Kudou Asuka was mumbling to herself in a sleepy

stupor as she read a book.

"...What a beautiful day."

The skies were clear and there were the sounds of the light breeze and flowing water.

It was indeed the best weather to be reading outside.

For an oujo-sama who had been born to riches and hence shut off in something similar to a birdcage, this was an extravagant way for Asuka to pass time.

And perhaps it was just too unusual for her to be accustomed to, her eyelids began to grow heavy and the sensation of drowsiness crept over her.

"... There won't be anyone watching. It is just a small shack that is so out of the way for anyone to come by anyways. Just a little nap would be fine, wouldn't it?"

Closing her book, Asuka elegantly smoothened out her dress as she leaned on the wall as she prepared to savour her afternoon nap while enjoying the blessing of the warm breeze and the cosiness that it brings.

Part 2

—An hour later.

Kasukabe carried a bunch of apples in her arms as she made her way towards the reservoir.

Perhaps it was a passing thought of hers to relish her snacks in the small shack.

Thus, Yō, who usually lacked the display of emotions of her expression, was wearing an expression that evidently showed her good mood today.

"...Ara? There's someone here before me?"

Halting her steps, she tilted her head as she peered at the two figures in the small shack.

One of them, characterized by the red formal dress and long straight hair, the girl was undoubtedly Kudou Asuka. Seeing her in this remote small shack, where she might have wanted to spend the holidays, was nothing too special.

The problem was about that other figure in the shack.

The one who wore a headphone around his neck, a gakuran male high school uniform while supporting a thick and heavy tome of an encyclopaedia with one hand—

"Izayoi? What are you doing?"

"Isn't it understandable with just a glance? ...It's a lap pillow." Declaring with a smug expression, Izayoi was providing a lap pillow for Asuka while reading a book along the corridor of the small shack where a pleasant ray of sunlight illuminated the area.

Yō tilted her head as she continued, "… was it requested by Asuka?"

"How's that possible? I originally intended to take a look at the condition of the farmlands while passing through this area. But, I stumbled upon Ojou-sama who was having such a blissful afternoon nap with so many openings to be exploited and I decided to tease her a little."

"Tease her?"

"Mhm Mhm. —Give it a thought will you? If Ojou-sama were to wake up in this kind of situation she would definitely blush to the tips of her ears and scramble in a fluster. I wanted to catch her in that situation to tease her about it."

Oh, I see, giving a clap that seemed to say that she understood the matter.

"That, I want to see as well."

"Right?"

"Mhm. So like that, I will be joining in." Saying that, she sat beside Izayoi and made a lap pillow out of his other thigh.

At this point, even Izayoi was sent into a panic for a moment.

"... Kasukabe?"

"It is just nice that Izayoi have two legs and the weather is the most awesome for an afternoon nap. ... So like that, please wake me up at the same time that Asuka wakes up."

Ha～ giving a yawn and assuming her position for an afternoon nap. It was exactly like the behavior of a large feline. This must be the feeling of being huddled up with a lion or leopard I guess, Izayoi gave a bitter smile as he resumed his reading.

Part 3

—Yet, another hour has passed.

"... Wow. The both of them are still asleep."

Having completed the book in his hand, Izayoi expressed his surprise about the two who were still sleeping soundly on his laps. Perhaps it was out of his estimations that they would still be asleep for that long.

With nothing to do at hand, Izayoi was also preyed upon by the drowsiness of the Sandman's grasp.

"It's a sunny day with the breeze of spring and the sound of running water. If I were to say it myself, it is indeed the conditions for an afternoon nap."

But if he did allow himself to be tempted by sleep, it would be a pity to miss the flustered reactions of Asuka. Just when he was entertaining the thought of "simply knocking her head to wake her", which was not of his usual way of doing things, an energetic voice came from the path that led from the Community's main building.

"Guys, This is bad! Things are going awry～!"

The rabbit ears bounced up and down as Kuro Usagi bounded up the path from the Community's main buildings to the shack facing the reservoir and braked sharply.

Having found Izayoi and the others, Kuro Usagi practically flew in her bounds and leaps to close in on Izayoi.

"Things are going very wrong! Things are going very wrong! Things are going very wro"

"You are being noisy."

Pak! And an apple flew towards Kuro Usagi's forehead.

Still in her excitement, even if her forehead was now red and swollen, she continued to chatter away with the apple clutched in hand.

"Any, Anyways, please take a look at this! They are passing out these things outside,"

"You are being noisy."

Pak! And yet another apple flew towards Kuro Usagi's forehead and landed a fatal strike. Not expecting the second apple to follow the first, She finally toppled over to face the skies.

At the same time, a golden board fell beside Izayoi.

"...? What's this?"

Taking the golden plate that felt very weighty in his hand, Izayoi stared at it in surprise.

"What is this golden slab? It sure seems to be the real thing from its density."

"It, It is real... and Kuro Usagi's forehead really hurts..." clutching the apples in both hands this time, her eyes reflected the light from her tears as she complained.

Just then, Kuro Usagi finally noticed Asuka and Yō.

"...Hmm? May I ask….. how, how did things become like this?"

"A rabbit doesn't have to think of things in a complicated fashion. So, what is this about the golden plate?"

*Klunk!*Izayoi gave the golden plate a knock as he asked KuroUsagi.

Seeming to have waited for this question for a long time, KuroUsagi puffed up her chest as she answered.

"Please listen up carefully! This golden plate is the [Geass Roll] for the Gift Game hosted for the inheritance of the alchemical secrets—＜RaimundusLullus＞!"

Wha? Izayoi gave a disbelieving squawk.

"Do you mean that ＜RaimundusLullus＞? The philosopher Raimundus Lullus?" [14]

"That's right! Using the alchemical technique to transform lead to gold, the one who solved the truth of alchemy for the world— the

great man who reached the technique of transmutation! And this Gift Game was hosted for the sake of conferring that great truth!"

HeeHee. KuroUsagi was so joyful that her rabbit ears were waving from side to side.

If they were able to obtain the Gift that gave the ability to transmute gold, they would not have to run around to raise funds anymore. It was a chance for the Community to instantly replenish its financial reserves.

Izayoi was partially doubting her words as he gave a glance over at the Golden plate with his steady gaze.

—The contents of the ＜RaimundusLullus＞ game were as follow.

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Participant qualification B: The Kind

Opponents: The Great.

The Heir

The Strength possessor.

The Intelligent

The Determined

The Virtuous

Conditions for defeat: Losing the [Geass Roll] is equivalent to losing the participation rights.

Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth.

Additional information: The Game shall begin when all participants have finished their preparations.

The end time for the Game is when all other contestants have been defeated.

Oath: Respecting the above information, swearing upon our glory and flag, this Gift Game is hosted by [Thousand Eyes].

"Seal of [Thousand Eyes]"]

"...Oi, KuroUsagi."

"YesYes, is something the matter?"

"It says here that the host is the [ThousandEyes]. Is there really no problem with this?"

It was becoming increasingly suspicious. Heightening his cautiousness, he scrutinised the contents of the [Geass Roll] once more."

However, KuroUsagi was more excited than was before as she waved her rabbit ears happily and looked at Izayoi with eyes brimming with hope.

"Regarding that point, it actually multiplies the trustworthiness of the game by a few fold! It is a game that took [ThousandEyes] a long time to prepare! This must surely be an incredible game and KuroUsagi will not be wrong about that!... And,"

Suddenly her words fell to a whisper.

KuroUsagi's index fingers and rabbit ears were tracing circles in the air as she suddenly shifted her gaze to the wasted pathways.

"it is time... for us to get the destroyed paths back in shape again. For that purpose, we would require some funds."

Upon KuroUsagi's urging, Izayoi also looked towards the wasted paths.

Three years ago— the [No Name]s had been destroyed by a devastating impact from an unknown Demon Lord.

The formerly magnificent residential area was now covered by gravel and sand and the wooden structures by the sides were also collapsing from the constant decay. The iron supports and metal wiring utilised in the construction of the structures along the path were also bending with rust. The withered trees that line the path were also left in the state of a pale white condition which made them look more like tombstone markers.

And in this residential area, it was the sleeping quarters of the children that included the Senior Group as well. Even if it weren't

possible to repair the damages, the cleaning up of the land to prepare for the construction of newer houses was the least that they should make plans for.

"...Hai. I guess there's no other way!"

Not hiding the lack of enthusiasm in the matter, Izayoi got to his feet.

And because of that movement, it caused Asuka and Yō's heads to knock together.

"Ah!?"

"... Oww."

"Well now, how long do you girls plan to sleep? The break is over. The hosting of a large scale Gift Game is starting."

Izayoi waved the Golden plate before the duo.

But KuroUsagi had frantically rushed over to interject, "No, But Izayoi-san. We don't even know the venue for the Game nor have we received the signal for the start of the game. There's no need for us to be in such a hurry right?"

...*Hai*, came a more unenthusiastic sigh as he tossed the Golden plate back to KuroUsagi.

"—it's coming. Dodge to the right!"

Instantaneously, the atmosphere of the duo underwent a dramatic transformation.

Seeming to have taken that warning as a cue, a hail of arrows rained in from the overgrown forest. Whereas Izayoi and KuroUsagi who had immediately entered the mental state for combat had carried Asuka and Yō respectively as they hurried away from the small shack.

"Aie!? Aie!?"

"Enemies...!?" Just like that, Asuka, who was still half asleep and unclear about the situation, was blinking her eyes in confusion.

Having smelt the enemies' presence, Yō was just a tad slower in entering her combat state.

Pulling out her [Vajra. Replica], KuroUsagi shouted at them shakily, "May, May I ask what is this with your attacks and all?!"

"Didn't you read the contents of the roll, you stupid rabbit?! This game is the battle for the [Geass Roll]s—the Golden Plate! The game has already started a long time ago!"

In the instant that he shouted the reply, the ground under Izayoi's feet exploded like lighted gunpowder as he broke into a sprint. There were the presence of eight individuals lying in ambush in the forest and they were most probably werebeasts from their scent.

Izayoi dived into the blind spot of the second wave of arrows and deftly grabbed the wrist of one of the ambushers in the next leap. The male werebeast, who prided himself with a stature of two grown men, was surprised by the speed of Izayoi's lithe movements.

"Wha?! So fast!"

"Baka. It's you who's too slow." Giving a twist to the opponent's wrist while initiating a low sweep at the legs as he gave that haughty speech, Izayoi sent the werebeast into the air where it spun three and a half rounds before landing on its back in the blink of an eye.

"Bastard!"

"Actually doing that to our comrade...!"

"Surround him! Surround and shoot him together!"

The irate comrades of the tripped up werebeast dispersed to surround and close in on Izayoi.

There were six silhouettes of the werebeasts moving around in the overgrown forest and Izayoi who had already pinpointed their locations from the sides of his eyes picked up a stone in irritation—

"Hai... Really now,I thought that I would pass some time with you guys but in the end you guys are only sneaking around the covers of other people's territory? You lot of bastards, go and reflect well on your actions—!!!"

Allowing the anger within him to explode, Izayoi simply threw the stone towards the ground.

The various species of trees and shrubbery that have been left alone to grow wildly in the past few years were instantaneously blown into the sky by the impossible intensity of the force. The werebeasts were also forcefully dispatched as they were unable to withstand the blow.

Soon after, the glinting golden board fell from one of the hands of those werebeasts who were blown into the air like the other various carcasses of the forest.

"And that will be our first piece. ... Really now, this sure is a troublesome game. Is it really going to get us the technique for transmutation? Even if it is a big sale that doesn't care about the losses of the organiser, there should still be some sort of limit to it."

Scratching his head as he complained, he simultaneously turned the golden plate around. This, was the main thing that Izayoi had been unsatisfied about from the start.

The "Gold Transmutation Technique"— is not a scientific perspective but one that belonged to the arcane perspective of researching alchemy.

It was said to be called by various names such as "The secret technique of Lullus", "The secret tracks of the King", "The last Alchemy" and was one that many were in search for as it was known to be the Gifts of the highest grade.

Especially when the name of the game also utilises the name of ‘RaimundusLullus'—the Japanese Name? Raimundus Lullus, is a philosopher who had many interesting news about him being associated to the alchemy of gold.

(One of those stories that is quite renowned is the legendary anecdote that he had given the King of England Edward III some gold. It was a story about transmuting many a dozen inferior metal bars into gold. But —)

Thinking up to that point, Izayoi suddenly changed his gaze to glance at the contents of the golden plate.

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Participant qualification D: The Heir

Opponents: The Kind.

The Great.

The Strength possessor.

The Intelligent

The Determined

The Virtuous

Conditions for defeat: Losing the [Geass Roll] is equivalent to losing the participation rights.

Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth.

Additional information: The Game will begin when all participants have finished their preparations.

The end time for the Game is when all other contestants have been defeated.

Oath: Respecting the above information, swearing upon our glory and flag, this Gift Game is hosted by [Thousand Eyes].

"Seal of [Thousand Eyes]"]

—Just when Izayoi was puzzling over the contents,

The golden plate corroded into a rusty piece of metal and disintegrated on the spot in the blink of an eye.

"Wha...?"

Although he had wanted to catch them in his moment of panic, but the powdered up rust particles of the Golden plate continued to trickle away from the grasp of his hands with a rustling sound. It was just an instantaneous event. The gold had lost its radiance and disappeared into the wind.

Part 4

—[No Name] Community grounds, the small shack facing the reservoir.

It was a clear day with the smell of spring in the air as they consolidated the situation near the water's edge. At the same time, they were having tea with the pancakes and tea that Lily had prepared for them.

Lily, who wore her chef coat, was sitting in a seiza as she cocked her ear towards Asuka to ask.

"I've tried out this new recipe of the seaweed pancake. May I ask if it is to your tastes?"

"Mhmm, yes, it is really tasty. Thank you."

Asuka was dividing her pancake into small bite size portions before picking them up to put into her mouth.

Whereas Yō who was taking huge bites out of it found it unthinkable as she asked, "But, I really didn't expect for seaweed to be found in this world. Does the world of Little Garden have a sea somewhere?"

"Yes, there is a certain sea in the south that is very famous. And well, because the North have very broad frozen rivers, I'm not too sure about them..."

Lily's kitsunemimi drooped while Asuka and Yō nodded and smiled as they were taken aback by the information.

"Little Garden is quite wide huh? So long as we improve the fame of the Community and the name of Jin-chan, there might come the day that we will be welcomed by the famous Communities of the sea."

"You are right. For that purpose— Let's try to solve this Gift Game together."

Having had a well-rested afternoon nap, Asuka and Yō read the contents once more.

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Participant qualification B: The Kind

Opponents: The Great.

The Heir

The Strength possessor.

The Intelligent

The Determined

The Virtuous

Conditions for defeat: Losing the [Geass Roll] is equivalent to losing the participation rights.

Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth.

Additional information: The Game will begin when all participants have finished their preparations.

The end time for the Game is when all other contestants have been defeated.

Oath: Respecting the above information, swearing upon our glory and flag, this Gift Game is hosted by [Thousand Eyes].

"Seal of [Thousand Eyes]"]

"A golden [Geass Roll]... it sure is written in a special style huh?"

"Mhm. The contents also seem a little special. Do you know something about this, Izayoi?" Yō asked through her mouthfuls of pancake.

On the other hand, Izayoi was giving a curious expression as he stood akimbo and in a slightly soft and disappointed mutter,

"... Mah, it's nothing too difficult to comprehend. Come to think about it, the contents are also nothing too unusual", he replied.

"Is that so?"

"Aahh. Although the numbers do not add up, but this figure here refers to the smallest unit recorded in the "Lullus technique". The Latin alphabet assigned to us is the mark that represents that unit." He replied while casting a doubtful glance towards the Golden Plate.

The [Lullus technique] is simultaneously the name of the game as it is a term to refer to the secret technique of the alchemist ‘Raimundus Lullus'. And among the terms, the smallest units are the following nine.

B: Kindness

C: Greatness

D: Inheritance

E: Strength

F: Wits

H: Morals

I: Truth

K: Glory

The language where these acronyms reside and combine as one is a portion of the [Round Plate of Lullus].

"There is this Latin alphabet of the "B" carved into the top of the participant's eligibility right? This is the Latin alphabet to represent the word of ‘kindness'. The guys who attacked us earlier also had a similar Latin alphabet carved into their golden plate, so I can't be wrong about that." Izayoi explained while pointing at the apprehended aggressors.

They were no longer in the game due to their failure of holding onto their Golden Plate. Although it was alright to let them off now, but they were still the ambushers who had snuck and infiltrated the lands of another Community. Even if the act was committed in the midst of the game, this was clearly a violation of rules. But with the negotiations of Izayoi and the others, in exchange for the condition of not reporting to the [Floor Master], they were to repent for their actions through the transaction of forced menial labour for a set number of days.

Izayoi walked towards the villains as he questioned them once more about the details of their disintegrated Golden Plate.

"You are sure that the participant eligibility that was carved on your Golden Plate is that of the "Participant qualification D: The Heir" right?"

Using a high tone to talk down to them, the dog ears of the man drooped in fear as he answered.

"Ye, Yes. Regarding that point, it is absolutely right."

"Good. Next question. Did you temper around with the Golden Plate or was it already like that when you received it?"

"No, we didn't ... Ah, but we did hear the instructions that the content would be a little bit different for each respective Community that it is assigned to!"

"Ho?"

The dog eared man, who was trying to lighten his sentence, obediently answered the questions.

Aie?? KuroUsagi tilted her head in surprise.

Having found that piece of intelligence from their interrogation, the problem children turned to look at KuroUsagi at the same time.

"... Oi, KuroUsagi. Was there explanations of that sort?"

"Aie? Well, that, Wait a moment! Or maybe they did say it too!"

"That is really vague for a reply. To actually skip over the explanation of the rules that was said by the Host, doesn't that make one feel less than enthusiastic about it?"

"Mhm. At this stage, if we are unable to clear the game, it will all be KuroUsagi's fault."

Asuka and Yō's retort caused KuroUsagi's ears to fall in dejection.

On the other hand, Izayoi stood akimbo as he asked for more clarification on the game from the villains.

"Then, besides that, did they say anything else about the game? Did they hint on any game rules about having to fight and wrest it from

the others?"

"Eh, Mhm. I did hear that it is of importance to gather all seven types of Golden Plates to successfully clear the game. And for the battle for the Golden Plates, it must follow the minigames hosted by the possessors of the Participation eligibility....."

"... Hou, and that would mean that you guys who have used brute force to try wrest it from us, would be Participants who have broken the rules, am I right?" Izayoi's gaze had sharpened and intensified in an instant.

Having dug their own graves, the villians frantically huddled tighter.

Grinning devilishly, the problem children trio seem glad about having caught the weakness of their opponents as they started to poke at it.

"Ojou-sama, we must really tip our hats off to these guys! If it were just a simple intrusion onto our lands, we might be able to process this with discretion. But to think that they would dare to violate the game rules hosted by [ThousandEyes] too!"

"That's right. I would have suggested a week of forced labour to be enough to forgive them... But since this is the case, it would be much different right, Kasukabe-san?"

"Mhm. For the clearing of the fields, we might just have to work them for a whole year or so."

Eek! The villains gave a pitiful moan.

They were undoubtedly serious about it.

KuroUsagi pitied the villains as she continued the topic.

"But to think that it is through the style of minigames. We do not have any prior experience of participating in this sort of game, do we?"

"Mhm Mhm."

"But, I did hear of it before. I remember that it is through the clearing of many small scale games right?"

KuroUsagi nodded to affirm Yō's words.

Small scale games— were simplified games hosted within the umbrella of another game.

Using the style of many different games with their accompanying different sets of rules as the style of game play, it was a game that required the combined efforts of the Community to win all the games till the end.

"Hmph~...Mah, we have already gotten the fundamentals of the game. In other words, the disintegration of the Golden Plate is due to the illegal acquisition of the Plate without the process of clearing a minigame?... Hmph. It sure is an average game after all huh?"

Izayoi, who was a little worked up about it, had now returned to his suspicious regard for the Golden Plate.

Come to think about it, the [Technique of Lullus] did not have much presence in the Round Plate other than the fact that it appears as the symbols of the Latin alphabet. It was hard to believe that this was a Gift Game that would allow one to get their hands on the secret of alchemy known as the [Gold Transmutation technique].

(There should be some sort of inner workings in this right?... In addition, this is something hosted by that Shiroyasha, it shouldn't become some sort of boring event right?)

It was Izayoi's belief to participate in any sort of game with fun in mind. However, the game this time had only left him with a sour premonition. Moreover, the contents of the game did not match up to the title of [RaimundusLullus] and that was bothering him.

Up till date, these sort of Gift Games were hosted by Communities that were related to the game. But it felt a little off when this sort of alchemical Gift Game was hosted by Shiroyasha and it made Izayoi hesitant.

Yet, there was this nagging feeling that it would be a pity not to go along with the game.

(The acronyms, Latin alphabets carved on the Golden Plate and the words that are born from the acronym that represents the [Technique of Lullus]. They hinted at the formation of words as being similar to the units that formed the material world, which is the key to encourage the birth of new concepts.)

"Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth."

‘Gather', and the other ‘I: Truth', ‘K: Glory'. These elements exuded a vaguely suspicious aftertaste to the whole event that kind of bothered Izayoi.

(Mah...it is only that much and I should not think too deeply about it should I?)

He gave up in impatience. To be able to line up the similar words together but be unable to draw a connection between them would make further thoughts useless and so it was best to leave it aside for now.

On the other hand, the girls' group have placed Izayoi's worries aside as they were getting enthusiastic about the whole event.

"Since we now know that it is a battle to wrest it from the others, let's take action immediately!"

"That's right... we need to gather the seven types. We'd better hurry."

"How are we going about this? Do we split up to challenge the minigames of the other Communities?"

"YES! We are fortunate to have four of our fighters of [No Name] who can best a thousand each! This is because KuroUsagi have also asked Leticia-sama to help us out. So, for the sake of acquiring those golden plates, KuroUsagi would like to request for you guys to go your separate ways for the task!"

Saying that, KuroUsagi sprinted towards the Community's Main building like an escaping rabbit.

The trio who were left behind exchanged a look with each other, seemingly helpless at the turn of events.

"Although KuroUsagi seemed really enthusiastic about it... What should we do now? If I were to put it bluntly, this is a very suspicious game."

"Having doubts about Shiroyasha's game isn't something that we have only experienced today. No matter what kind of unimaginable truth which may lie in wait for us, we will never get to find that out

if we were to stay out of it."

"...just saying that it sounds fishy from the start."

Yō just gave a wry smile at their conversation.

Izayoi had a bored look on his face, took a few steps as he prepared to set out—Suddenly, he turned back with a sly smile.

"No, there's another way. If it is a boring game, then we can just add value to it."

"Aie?"

"Wha?"

Asuka and Yō queried at the same time.

Izayoi continued on his way as he laughed heartily to toss them a challenge.

"No matter what boring end it might be in hold for us, this is still a game that Shiroyasha hosted after all. There should surely be some reciprocating rewards in wait for us right? — So how's this? The person who gets the most of the seven Golden Plates gets to have the sole ownership of the prize. How's that sound?"

"Ara. Doesn't that sound interesting?" Asuka gave a smile in reply to Izayoi's challenge.

Yō also nodded her head as she gave a thumbs up while supplying her own suggestion.

"But it would be boring with just that condition. The loser.... Shall have to serve the victor for a whole day."

"I see... Don't you feel that it is a little too harsh?"

Asuka was backing away a little. If it turned out to be a race of getting to the various minigames hosted in various areas, it would be a harsh rule to impose on her, who lacked the mobility of the others.

So Yō gave it some thought before clapping her hand as she hit upon an idea.

"Then, the victor... can make KuroUsagi serve them."

" "That's the one!" "

"That's the one! My foot! You bunch of Bakaaaaahhhh!!!"

PakPakPak! The folding fan in KuroUsagi's hand was working overtime. Stowed under her armpit was Leticia whom she had fetched from the Community's main building. And it would seem that she was in the midst of her maid chores as the cleaning cloth was still grasped in her hand.

Leticia, and her gorgeous hair that seemed easily mistakable as golden silk, gave a sigh while seeming in a daze but raised her right hand that held the cleaning cloth.

"Regarding that game, count me in."

"Wait, Leticia-sama?!"

"Okay, the maid has entered the fray! If Leticia wins, KuroUsagi will have to do the chores of a maid for a day!"

"Then, let's change the name of <RaimundusLullus> to the <The competition for the Authority to gain KuroUsagi's servitude>."

"Mhm, you two, let's get to the streets quickly!"

The trio completely ignored KuroUsagi's tsukkomi as they split up in the free zone.

And due to the unexpected turn of events, KuroUsagi's rabbit ears have turned a shade of ashen white as she stood in a daze.

She had not thought that things would turn out this way.

KuroUsagi turned to Leticia apprehensively,

"Well, ...Leticia-sama, you are kidding right...?"

Clapping her hands around the completely panicking KuroUsagi's shoulders, Leticia assured her,

"There's naught to worry. I shall tutor you on the job of a maid, so just be prepared."

"Isn't that like a fully motivated attitudeeee—-?!!!"

Pak! the sound of the folded fan making a sorrowful slap

resounded in the overgrown forest.

Part 5

—A branch store of [ThousandEyes] , before the trees that line the street.

The peach coloured petals danced in the air.

The participants were fighting to be the first in the challenges that betted the Golden Plate as the prize. Although Gift Games were a test of one's intellect and physical prowess, the minigame style focused on the cooperativeness of the group as a whole.

The normally desolate lower levels had now livened up due to the various games hosted in the region.

"Hohoho... Everyone, enjoy the frenzy to gather the Golden Plates."

Shiroyasha stood with her arms akimbo as she looked at the progress of the minigames.

"Give it your all, youngsters of the lower levels. The final point of this game is a glory that is unattainable even after a hundred years of patience."

Standing under the Azure blue cloth, the flag emblazoned with the symbol of the ‘twin goddess who faced each other', Shiroyasha waited for her challengers with the gaze of a Demon Lord.

"＜RaimundusLullus＞—Players who can surpass this game will get the chance to pick a fight with me as their opponent...!!!"

Part 6

—Outer Gate, In front of the Fountain Plaza.

Due to Shiroyasha's game, the fountain plaza was bustling with a rarely seen lively atmosphere.

The stall assistants of the street stalls, which were located in the usually desolate streets for a long time now, were also busying without rest in conjunction with the increase in the flow of people. And this was a rather rare sight for the lowest levels of the East Side.

There were also food stalls for snacks being set up in the area.

Izayoi stuck up a conversation with the feline shop assistant—Carol, as he bought a sandwich from the stall of [Six Scars].

"Yo. It seems like it's quite lively huh?"

"We are almost too busy to breathe! It's not always that we get this large scale hosting of minigames! And that makes today the best day to for us to earn. Neh～!"

Carol happily smiled as she waved her hook-like tail.

Placing the sandwich set before himself, Izayoi asked offhandedly as he looked around,

"There seems to be more participants than I expected. Are there famous Communities taking part in this game as well?"

"Yeap. Although we of [Six Scars] are considered a sizeable Community, there seems to be a few Communities that are much bigger in their scale who are participating too. Although they are mainly of the commerce type!"

"... Ho? Which large ones are they?"

"In the six digits, there's [Six Scars], [One Horn], [Willo'wisp]. In the five digits, there are the Communities under the flag of [Onii-Hime] Alliance from the North and [Kerykeion]. Although these Communities are fairly famous in this region... but the focus of the spotlight still goes to the one from Little Garden's Three digits,

[Queen Halloween]!"

*Poing*The hooked tail straightened as informed Izayoi.

At this point, Izayoi's expression changed.

"... From the three digits?"

"But it is also impossible that the Queen would personally make her way down to join the fray. Moreover, there is this relationship between her and Shiroyasha-sama that can be likened to the tense relations of fire and ice. The one who's representing the Queen is from the important members of the Queen's Knights. And it was a task assigned to a lone knight by the Queen. All thanks to that, the number of Participants who are entering the game on the account of their personal curiosity have increased to an unprecedented crowd."

Carol happily placed the sandwich into a carrier bag and Izayoi subsequently took the sandwich and turned to leave the stall after the payment.

Sitting himself at the fountain of the fountain plaza, Izayoi grimaced as he folded his arms before his chest.

(... . Could it be that this is a game of an extraordinary difficulty level?)

His gaze shifted to the [Geass Roll] contents that was carved on the Golden Plate.

Although Carol had mentioned it in a carefree manner, but the Communities that were named were all organizations of a large scale. And even those who would usually stay away from the games of the lower levels, especially [Kerykeion] and [Queen Halloween] which were super large scale Communities.

The former being a guardian for the Greek God treasury while the latter being a DaiMaou who possessed Sun Authorities. [15]

And it mattered greatly that both the names of those Communities were well known enough for Izayoi, who came from another world, to have heard of them. They were also known to be the type of Communities that would usually not participate in the games of Little Garden's lowest level.

As his gaze fell back to the [Geass Roll], Izayoi put on a solemn

expression as he studied the contents repeatedly.

"Golden Plate... huh. Mah, even if it isn't the technique to transmute gold, it should still be some kind of important blessing (Gift)."

Delivering the sandwich to his mouth and adding the details of the participant characteristics into the matrix, he started to give it more thought.

— The community of [Kerykeion].

The name of the Community was derived from the mystical sceptre that is possessed by the god of Commerce who made up one of the Greek gods from the "Twelve Pillars of Olympus". The flag emblazoned with the symbol of the ‘Two intertwined snakes" was also famous in the outside world.

Besides the organisations of the European commercial and medical sectors, it is also depicted on the National High School's badge to represent the core of creativity and is a flag that is known to both the Eastern and Western Seas.

If faith was similar to spiritual power, it would not be exaggerating to say that [Kerykeion] s a symbol that garnered a group of believers for the Greek gods from the 1900s to the 2000s and acted as their pillar for support. For that sort of Commerce focused Community to enter the game hosted by [Thousand Eyes], it would definitely signal a hidden agenda that only insiders would know about.

Following them— was the Community of [Queen Halloween].

By the 21st Century, Halloween has already become a festive event. However, if one were to turn back time to its origins, they would realise that it is a traditional ritual practiced by the ancient Celts at the peak of their prosperity.

The Celts had the tradition of hosting various harvest rituals in honour to the Sun, which radiance varied with the four seasons and was seen as a symbol for life and death. This is the faith that the Celts hold for the Sun. The origins of Halloween.

When talking about the Celtic mythologies, the better known Sun God would be the Sun God Lugh who had the alias of [The Bright One with the Strong Hand] and possessed the spear of assured victory. But that was only the Celts who elevated their ancestor to

the level of the Gods to be worshipped as one of the ancestral spirits to be worshipped. And that was the foundation for the idol's creation. Originally, he was supposed to be categorized as a Heroic spirit but it was the faith and followers of the descendants who elevated him to the position of a God-class spirit after his death.

And even if one were to be elevated to the position of an Elder God, they would never be conferred the title of the strongest type if they had originally been humans.

It was only reserved for the pure-blooded dragon kind, the representatives for the planets and the natural God-class spirits.

To protect the Gods, it was imperative to possess a power that belonged to the strongest three as that sort of power was an isolated spiritual power which was a class of its own.

And among the Gods of the Celt descendants, there was the strongest kind that had its worship based on the faith of the Sun's trajectory, the Celestial spirit who controlled the Sun and the Boundary—[Queen Halloween].

(Even though it is said to be so, the sovereignty of the Sun is being repressed by Shiroyasha. Wouldn't that make it a personal grudge?)

Propping his chin with one hand as he pondered over the question, Izayoi was unsure about the origins of this existence in Little Garden that was called the Queen. Although he did have knowledge about the festival of Halloween, he was unsure if the Queen's existence was one that had been elevated from the position of Man or had it been by another method. All that he knew were the fire and ice relationship between her and Shiroyasha and her position as one of the three biggest problem children in Little Garden.

And that they were all strength types who were strong individuals who matched their names.

(If I recall Leticia's words correctly... "Do not lift a hand against the Queen of Gold" right? Although the advice seems exaggering, is she really that strong to warrant that warning?)

As long as he did not witness it with his own eyes, it was only acceptable for him to harbour such thoughts. Moreover he was in a bad mood. Although he had agreed to the game out of compliance sake, it turned out that he had participated in a suspicious game and besides the feeling of dissatisfaction, there were the feelings of

dissatisfaction. But, he could not just get up and walk away even he felt that way about the whole business. Having the chance to get the rare authority to have KuroUsagi as a maid is something that would be much too regrettable if it were to fall into the hands of the other two.

(Mah, I must work hard if I want to obtain something that I want to get.)

As he shook his head haplessly and was planning to find a challenger for the game—

Suddenly, there was a huge cheer that erupted from the area next to his resting spot.

"That's super awesome, five consecutive victories in just a blink of an eye!"

"May even be the fastest person to clear the game!?"

"Bastards, the opponent is just a girl and you guys are losing this much? How can you give up just like that?!"

"That's right! Call our people together! After all there's no way for us to win! Everyone, let's do it together!!!"

What? He turned his head as he felt that the words sounded strange. Normally, one would have assumed that it was just the usual piece of misheard conversation but it would seem that things were not the same this time.

If this were to be a contest for the game, it would be fine. But if this were to be a start to a contest that is outside of a game's perimeter, it would really be infuriating. Perhaps hearing that a woman is being targeted by physical violence was something that irked him.

But the foundation of the reasons would be his bad mood. And that would be the biggest reason.

Izayoi stood up with the thought that this would be a good opportunity to sweep away his melancholic feelings. Just as he was about to turn to carry out his motto of "supressing both the strong and the weak"—- five grown men were sent flying at the same time.

"Hoh?"

Dodging in his astonishment, the men of huge statures rolled pass him with an intensity that seemed bent on scraping the top of the stone tiles in the fountain plaza and they soon passed out due to their inability to defend themselves in time.

In the middle of that scene, Izayoi's gaze had already shifted to size up the opponent with curiosity in his eyes.

The woman who sent the huge men fling was in a strange outfit of a linen robe that covered her from head to toe.

"...Hoh? Looks like the proclaimation of having an instantaneous five consecutive victory is not a lie."

Commenting frivolously, he continued to move closer towards the linen robed woman.

Although the face was mostly hidden in the depths of the hooded robe, one could still see the faint outlines of a mask like structure within that hood which was scrutinizing the scene before her. It would seem that it was a person who really wanted to hide their identity.

A self-composed Izayoi walked towards the other as his interest was steadily growing by the moment.

The masked female then wordlessly extended the [Geass Roll].

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Participant qualification E: The possessor of Strength.

Opponents: The Kind

The Great

The Heir

The Intelligent

The Determined

The Virtuous

Conditions for defeat: Losing the [Geass Roll] is equivalent to losing the participation rights.

Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth.

Additional information: The Game will begin when all participants have finished their preparations.

The end time for the Game is when all other contestants have been defeated.

Oath: Respecting the above information, swearing upon our glory and flag, this Gift Game is hosted by [Thousand Eyes].

"Seal of [Thousand Eyes]"]

[16]

After Izayoi confirmed the contents of the [Geass Roll], the masked female tilted her head as she spoke up.

"... My minigame is "strength". What's left would be "The Kind" and "The Virtuous"."

"Well, that's great. My [Geass Roll] is "The Kind". So we just need to bet on these things and hold the minigame?"

"That's correct. Although it would become the contest between "The Kind"and "Strength"..."

What is your opinion? The masked female tilted her head as she posed the unspoken question. From her actions and calm voice, it gave off a well cultured feel about this person and she probably did not belong to the lower levels.

Izayoi suppressed his soaring anticipation of facing this unknown strong foe as he managed two replies.

"I do not have interest in "The Kind". And it is too vague for an abstract term. I would personally choose "Strength"."

"I understand."

KaChi! Pulling the sword out of the scabbard, that movement gave a glimpse of the white gauntlet, abdominal armour and knight dress under the long robes. She was clearly a type of knight.

In the moment that Izayoi committed himself to the minigame's oath and took his first step forward—

Shuu! The tip of a sword narrowly missed his nose.

"—Hm?!"

By the time that he noted the image of the sword, his upper torso was already leaning back.

His body had responded earlier than his consciousness from his perception.

What Izayoi's vision had noted was just a minor twitch of that masked female's hand for just an instant. Although it was careless of him to ignore that information, but it really was a scary speed of unsheathing the sword.

(Ha...! This fellow is really worthy of praise...!!)

The unrelenting flash of the blade struck towards Izayoi again. The subsequent trajectory of the attack and the sharpness of its angle was fairly unusual. And it was the fastest strike that Izayoi had witnessed among all his opponents in the world of Little Garden thus far.

Switching from his carefree attitude, Izayoi instantly recognised the strength of his opponent.

But in regards to that point, the masked female also shared the same thoughts.

(He dodged it...?)

Although she wasn't haughty about her strength, but she did not expect someone from the lower levels to be able to dodge her sword. It might have been chance for the first strike but on the second dodge, that would be reflective of the true potential.

Immediately classifying Izayoi as a strong opponent, the masked female took a large step backwards.

Giving a twist to the sword's hilt to slowly and smoothly release it into its whip form.

Realising that the weapon is a whip sword, Izayoi immediately drew closer.

(Although the storing of that sword might be a very smooth move on her part, but it is definitely a bad idea in this case.)

The strike of a bladed whip is indeed a threat but as long as one drew close to the wielder, it would be nothing to worry about. And although the capturing of the blade tip movements is a very difficult feat, but as long as one watched the hand movement closely, it would be possible to trace the sword's trajectory. That was how Izayoi anticipated the moment that the whip sword would strike and used a ground exploding speed to close in onto his opponent's territory.

Charging with speed that reduced the ground to rubble

If it were just a normal enemy, just the wind pressure would be able to distinguish the victor.

But the masked female seemed to have anticipated this move as she drew out a spear for each hand.

(Wha...?!)

"It's the end. It was a fairly good fight."

Proclaiming her victory and simultaneously emitting a high speed flash from the long robes. It would seem that this was a strike that would also doubtlessly bring down any ordinary opponents.

But Izayoi's level of absurdity was a step higher.

Knowing full well that it was too late to halt his advance, Izayoi clenched his fist to punch towards the stone floorings to send the shattered ground flying into the air.

"...?!"

The sound of an explosion. And the stone tiles of the plaza which popped up from the reaction.

The masked female's foothold was instantly eliminated and could only dance in mid-air. Izayoi assumed the moment to be his best chance and lifted his head to press his pursuit.

But it was a pity that he was late by a fraction.

The masked female who gave a somersault in the air had switched to a bow in a flash to rain arrows upon Izayoi.

"Tch, bastard!"

Cursing a mouthful while dodging at lightning speed to escape the shower of arrows, the style of the masked female's way of combat finally dawned upon Izayoi.

Dual spears, whip sword and followed by the bow.

Utilising a close, middle and long range weapon to cover any potential openings in battle. Though it might sound simple in words, this was a really unusual martial art. It was a strategy that can only be possible if one refined their skills for the respective weapons to the same utmost heights that can be reached for each of the respective martial arts.

(... What will come will come eventually, right?)

As Izayoi dodged the shower of arrows, he shifted himself to hide in the shadows of the fountain.

The enemy beyond his expectations had finally appeared before his eyes but what appeared in his eyes weren't that of happiness.

What swam within his eyes were an intense mix of emotions.

The enemy was undoubtedly strong and one that was the direct opposite of Izayoi's type.

Different from the naturally gifted Izayoi, one could tell that the masked female had certainly undergone some unusual training and study in her martial arts. Having such an unusual confidence and trust in her sword, spear and bow techniques, one would require a strong determination or they would not be able to attain such a level of mastery. An evidence would be the ability to quell Izayoi's choice of attacks even when he held the upper hand in the speed of attacks and defence.

The enemy was more than just powerful. She was smart.

(KuroUsagi.... Although this is somewhat late, but this is a super GoodJob!)

Having had the chance to meet such a rare strong opponent whom he might never have the chance to meet in the near future, Izayoi clenched his fist tightly as he continued to think for the sake of defeating the strong foe before him.

And it was at that moment that the commotion started in the

distance.

Part 7

"This is bad...! Izayoi has a one up on us...!"

"Mhm... Thinking about it carefully, we do not have the [Geass Roll] in our hands too."

Asuka who bit her nails in regret and Yō who drooped her shoulders in a wry smile.

Besides the fact that the [Geass Roll] provided the rights of partipation, it was also the ticket to the games. As long as Izayoi held onto it, they wouldn't be able to participate in any minigames.

It was at this moment when they decided to participate in the game that the duo, who excitedly ran to the streets, realised the flaw in their plans.

Biting her thumb in regret, Asuka watched the minigames in resentment.

"Not being able to participate even though it is being held in our own back yards, ... what a humiliation...!"

"Yeah. Our neighbours seem to be enjoying themselves but it sure is lonely to be unable to participate."

Yō smiled wryly as she comforted Asuka who was frustrated by their situation.

Yō then bought a candied apple to try enjoy the festival in another way. And it would seem in line with her way of life where it was satisfying with just the appeasement of her basic needs of a bath, meals and a bed to sleep in.

When Asuka's anger had passed and left her feeling empty, she joined Yō with a chocolate coated banana from the stalls which she bit into in silence.

After that, the duo changed their route to walk among the festival stores to do a little window shopping.

And a loud voice attracted the attention of the customers as it gave off a loud cheerful laugh.

"Yahohoho! Everyone, please get ready, okay! We are now starting the explanations for the special game hosted by [Willo'wisp]!"

"We will be offering the three [Geass Roll]s of "The Intelligent", "The Determined" and "The Virtuous" through the style of a minigame!"

"As for those who do not meet the participating conditions, you may also participate if you offer an equivalent reward for the bet!"

—Aie? Asuka and Yō turned their heads at once.

The focus of their gazes were pinned upon the Pumpkin head ghost, Jack whom they had met in the Birth of the Fire Dragon Festival. And sitting cross legged on his head was Ayesha the Ignis Fatuus who spotted the duo and subsequently waved and called to them.

"Oh, it's the [No Name]s from before, right? Are you guys here to participate as well?"

"... Is it okay to participate without the [Geass Roll] too?"

"As long as you pay the corresponding price.—But, our game is really intense you know?" Ayesha grinned as she dropped the provocation.

At this point, the duo would not have retreated and they replied with the same tone.

Asuka and Yō had a face of grim determination as they accepted the challenge to stand before Jack.

"No problem. Just state the price that is required of us."

"There's no problem since we will win it anyways."

"Yahohoho! Being so energetic is the best!"

"HmHmph, you will have all the time to regret after hearing the condition."

That's impossible. The duo said it in unison.

In contrast to the stubborn duo, Jack and Ayesha smiled in reply.

Confirming that they have gathered a sizeable group of participants, Ayesha spread her arms to make the announcement.

"Our minigame shall be—- this!"

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Minigame: "Intelligence" and "Determination" and "Virtue".

Summary of the Rules: The winner shall be the one who sells the most goods of [Willo'wisp] within an hour.

But with respect to the above, all participants are required to wear the maid costume which has the [Willo'wisp] flag emblazoned on it while engaging in the sales.

As a side note, male participants are also required to wear the maid costume.

The losing parties would be forced to wear the maid costume and work for [Willo'wisp] for a full day without payment.]

" "Wuaah!!!" "

The duo, and the male participants had felt themselves trembling at the announcement.

Part 8

—Outergate, before the Fountain Plaza.

"Mhm... where did everyone go?!!" [17]

KuroUsagi's ears drooped in dejection as she casually strolled in the Fountain Plaza. In her search for Izayoi and the others who broke into a run that left only a trail of dust in their wake from the main building of the Community, KuroUsagi was now wandering aimlessly with a lack of enthusiasm as she swayed unsteadily in the Free zone of the city. [18]

Leticia, with her blond hair that sparkled brilliantly, had accompanied KuroUsagi in her drifting walk around the minigame venue.

Wearing her maid costume, Leticia did not lose her stern look as she fell in step behind KuroUsagi. Just like a pretty servant who shadowed a step behind her master. For Leticia, who had been trained strictly as a knight, to mimic a servant would probably be very easy task.[19]

Leticia gave a wry smile as she looked at the droopy eared KuroUsagi.

"Although it would be nice if you could pull yourself together, but I would still suggest for you to be more optimistic about this. It is a rare sight to have a game of such scale in the East side. It is the best time chance for us to relax a little isn't it?"

"Indeed, it sure is as you said….."

The atmosphere of the streets have livened up under the hearty shouts of the stall keepers and the ornate decorations of the area. And although it was all too easy to enjoy oneself in this lively place, the situation that she was caught up in was something that prevented her from doing so.

According to the movements of the problem children trio, there was the possibility for herself to be teased around as they get to order her around as a maid.

Just the imagination of their possible treatment in stall for herself

was enough to cause her rabbit ears to quiver.

"All KuroUsagi did was to act as the agent for the game... how it end up like this...?!"

"Mah, don't look at it that way. If you get used to it, it is actually not bad to be a maid. KuroUsagi would definitely look pretty in a maid costume and I will make sure to teach you the ways properly, so you needn't be so worried."

Leticia covered her mouth as she smiled.

KuroUsagi felt her rabbit ears drain in strength even further.

Just as they were wandering along the street in a casual stroll,— suddenly, the symbol of an uncommonly seen flag came into their field of sight.

"...KuroUsagi, look at that flag symbol emblazoned on that guy's chest."

"Aie?"

"That's the one. The design of a sceptre and a snake —- that is the symbol of the [Kerykion]s."

Slightly jutting her chin to motion towards the subject of the conversation.

Leticia was referring to the male who had the design of twin snakes, which intertwined around each other, emblazoned upon his chest.

KuroUsagi immediately perked her rabbit ears as she lowered her voice as she spoke.

"A [Kerykion]...?! Why would one of the Guardians of the Greek God Treasuries be down here in the East Side's lowest levels?!"

"I do not know either. It is a big possibility that they have come to participate in the game. But there is also the chance that they are sent here due to the incident with [Perseus]."

Just a month prior, [No Name] had accomplished the noteworthy deed of defeating a Community of [Perseus] that stood under the flag of the [ThousandEyes], and successfully wiped its flag from the starry heavens.

But that would also mean the destruction of a portion of the Greek gods' faith and associated followers. In that case, it was highly doubtful that the Greek gods would continue to sit by and do nothing.

"The game was also related to [ThousandEyes] for the other occasion. Hence, we did not think of any retributive acts... But looks like it would be best to have some caution. Let's go find Izayoi and the others immediately."

"YES!"

Clenching her fists, she mustered her enthusiasm. In this sort of situation, she could not afford to allow herself to be always burdened down by some setbacks and so she straightened her rabbit ears while straightening out her thoughts.

Just when they were about to split ways to conduct their search— a familiar voice floated over from a tent in a lane away from the alley.

"Well now, Asuka, this is not the time to be shy. If you do not make an effort to attract customers, we will never be able to win you know?"

"I, I can't do this! Using this sort of embarrassing appearance to appear before the crowds, I will never be able to do this!?"

"Don't worry. It fits you SUPER well. It's a SUPER GOOD JOB. A SUPER maid."

"SUPER maid?!"

"SUPER maid?!!"

"Heeh～ A SUPER maid?"

Leticia's eyes were sparkling as she heard those words.

Probably the flipping of a strange switch somewhere, Leticia who strode over to the tent flipped the tent flaps with a fierce intensity to her actions.

"EEEiiYaaaaa…..!?"

"Mhm?"

A small pitiful wail came from the inside as Leticia made a sound of being in thought as she evaluated the appearance of the voice's owner.

It was none other than Kudou Asuka and Kasukabe Yō within the tent and they were both wearing a white and black laced maid miniskirt. They were so surprised that they rested their hands on the cart filled with [Willo'wisp] produce such as the candle holders, glass lamps, dining cutlery and such which were assigned to them for their portion of the sales.

And especially for Asuka, whose cheeks had turned to a bright cherry red, she was shivering in cowardice.

"Le, Leticia...? Why would you be here?"

"Because I heard your voices from outside and was just wondering what it might be. But... Mhmmm."

Holding her chin as she appreciated the maid garb of the duo.

Contrasting to Asuka's usual dressing of the red formal dress and the other wide dresses, this maid costume was of a pretty high exposure value.

The tender white skin that has rarely seen the sun was eye catching, coupled with the contours of her sexy thighs and the low neckline of the costume that went down to the splits of her bossom. Although Asuka was still young, but this much was already enough to give off a feminine charm.

As for Yō, though she might lack the feminine charm, the tenderness of youth and the maid costume made a combination that accentuated an atmosphere of cuteness. If accompanied with a sincere smile, she would definitely be impeccable as a shop assistant.

Leticia looked at the duo in maid outfits for a moment before giving a light sigh.

"...Umu. Such a great impact from their youth. Is this what they call the ideal super maid?"

"No, if you were to talk about looking young, wouldn't Leticia-sama's appearance seem tender and much younger?"

KuroUsagi gave her tsukomi in a small voice.

That's not the point, was what Leticia wanted to retort, but retorting at this point would also be of no particular use.

Pointing at the cart beside the duo with her finger, Leticia continued her questions.

"Is this cart related to the reason for your dress up as maids?"

"Aie? Mhm. Actually—"

Asuka tried to cover as her bare skin that was revealed by the costume as she passed the [Geass Roll] of [Willo'wisp] over to them.

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Minigame: "Intelligence" and "Determination" and "Virtue".

Summary of the Rules: The winner shall be the one who sells the most goods of [Willo'wisp] within an hour.

But with respect to the above, all participants are required to wear the maid costume that has the [Willo'wisp] flag emblazoned on it while engaging in the sales.

As a side note, male participants are also required to wear the maid costume.

The losing parties would be forced to wear the maid costume and work for [Willo'wisp] for a full day without payment.]

Having read it with her focused attention, Leticia scrunched her brows as she got to the middle portion.

"... Wait a moment. Is this really the entirety of the game's contents?"

Leticia has furrowed her brows in suspicion. This game deviated from the norm of pitting the Host and the Participants against each other. Instead, it was created with the precondition that the Participants would be fighting each other for the reward. With that in mind, the [Willo'wisp] would lose all their Golden Plates and their participation qualification as well.

Facing Leticia who tilted her head ever so slightly, Yō smiled wryly as she replied.

"Jack and the others have lost interest in the game after learning about the participation of [Queen Halloween] and so they have offered up the three pieces for the winner of the minigame."

"If we follow their line of thought, it would mean that it wouldn't be of any use to them even if they did win the game."

What?! They exclaimed in surprise.

Although they were surprised that Jack and the others were disinterested in the game, but regarding [Queen Halloween]— one of the largest organizations from the three digit Communities in Little Garden to have joined a game of the lowest levels, that was

something that truly elicited their cry of surprise.

"Not only [Kerykeion] but [Queen Halloween] have joined this sort of game of the lowest levels... it sure is situation that is hard to believe."

"But if it really promises the secret technique to transmute gold, the "Alchemy of Gold", one would think that the presence of these Communities in the participants would not be something unthinkable would it?"

KuroUsagi straightened her rabbit ears as she said it with confidence.

Regarding that point, Leticia held a contrasting attitude. [ThousandEyes] is indeed a large Community that is known to all, but it did not seem plausible for them to offer such a reward to the lowest levels.

"About that, could it be... something that is kept secret from the normal participants?"

"...that is possible as well. Let's tidy up the information that we have at hand currently.

—For the sake of understanding the situation, all the information that we have till date would be tidied up and presented here.

The Gift Game <RaimundusLullus> is one that uses the contents for the Gold transmutation technique, the "Alchemy of Gold". The victory will go to the person who gathers the seven pieces of Golden Plates. [Willo'wisp] seems to have figured out the rewards and deemed it to be of no use. The large scale Communities of [Kerykeion] and [Queen Halloween] have joined the fray. From the points of iii and iv, it would be plausible to speculate that the prize is something that will not matter unless it is given to a large scale Community. Listing out the important elements that they could think of, they racked their brains together.

But they were still unable to get close to the answer with just those clues. As she tilted her head while poring over the contents of the [Geass Roll] repeatedly, —*Ah*, Yō seemed to have stumbled upon something as she looked up.

"Could it be….. that this game is basically a competition between the "commercial forces"?"

"What?"

"And the meaning is?"

Asuka, Leticia and KuroUsagi asked simultaneously.

Yō squatted as she traced the contents of the [Geass Roll] on the floor.

[–Name of Gift Game: "RaimundusLullus"—

Participant qualification B: The Kind

Opponents: The Great.

The Heir

The Strength possessor.

The Intelligent

The Determined

The Virtuous

Conditions for defeat: Losing the [Geass Roll] is equivalent to losing the participation rights.

Conditions to win: Gather all the "Plates of Lullus" and you shall receive the glory of the truth.

Additional information: The Game will begin when all participants have finished their preparations.

The end time for the Game is when all other contestants have been defeated.

Oath: Respecting the above information, swearing upon our glory and flag, this Gift Game is hosted by [Thousand Eyes].

"Seal of [Thousand Eyes]"

Initially, we assumed that we would have to pass through seven minigames to clear the main game but it turned out that there isn't such a restriction. Having accepted the minigame of Jack and the others, we realise that we can also bet three pieces of [Geass Roll]s at once. "In other words, as long as we choose a common topic for

the minigame in this Gift Game, it will also be permissible for us to bet with seven pieces of the Golden Plate at once. "And wouldn't that refer to the "commercial forces"? Yō made the speculation.

Kindness, wisdom, determination and virtune were terms that were used to describe the basics of commercial trust.

As for greatness, legacy and strength, those were nouns to describe the scale of the Community and the accompanying economic might.

As for the winning condition of "Gather all the "Plates of Lullus"", it would hint that one only needed to host a minigame to complete the task.

Then, that would also mean—

"Could it be that... the real participants are not us but the stalls?"

Asuka looked at stalls around them from left to right and back again.

Probably peeved to find herself to be a mere decorum on the stage of performance.

Yō nodded her head in affirmation as she proposed her last conjecture.

"Mhm. The last victor will surely gather the seven pieces of the Golden plates and will be picked from the Community which reaped the most profits. From the perspective that there are large scale commerce focused communities such as [Kerykion] participating in the game, I would guess that the reward would not be of a tangible tool or alchemical technique but an authority of sorts for the Commercial world— what are your thoughts?"

With regards to Yō's speculation, everyone folded their arms as they sank into deep thought.

If the speculation were to be right, this game would not be of any use for the [No Name]s. They did not have the foundation of engaging in commercial activities and it would be something that wouldn't serve any purpose even if it did land into their hands.

KuroUsagi could not hide her disappointment as her rabbit ears hung down dejectedly.

"If it is like that... the aim of KuroUsagi to fix the wastelands will not be coming true..."

After all, it was such a barren piece of land.

To regain the former glory of its beautiful view, talented individuals and wealth were necessary for the task. Merun and Deen were already having their hands full with the work in the farmlands and they were unable to help out with the barren ruins. And to provide for a hundred and twenty children, the [No Name]s just did not have the economic capabilities to bring about that sort of rebuilding effort.

"But to get the Gold plates as the consolation prize of being a participant, that would be good enough! If we were to exchange this gold piece—"

"—Wait. What's that about?"

Yō raised a hand as she directed the question at KuroUsagi. Her tone revealed her earnest query about the matter. Facing this situation of having created a confusion, KuroUsagi frantically supplied an additional explanation.

"Really, Really sorry about that. The explanations were incomplete. This Golden plate will be given to Participants who enter the game. So, even if we do not win the game, we will still be receiving a golden plate."

Pak! Came the sound of a fist landing on a palm as they finally understood the reasoning.

But with all that in place it would really connect the dots, if one were to think along the lines of the game stage being one that targeted for the participants to spend money. After all, the initial participants were all gathered to be the decorum of the stage.

Falling into deep thought after listening to KuroUsagi's words—- Yō suddenly smiled mischievously with the hint of a prank in mind.

"Then, let's just accept those gold pieces."

"—Aie?"

"If this is a competition for the gold plates where we engage each other with the fight for the highest earnings, the gold plates should

go to the Community with the highest earnings. We might as well have a share in this market of theirs and give these bold and confident tradesmen a returning blow."

"Ara, that's a good idea. But do we stand a chance?"

With regards to Yō 's brazen proclamation of a strategy, Asuka replied with a smile.

Yō drew herself up to full height ass he knocked on the push cart piled full with the crafted items of [Willo'wisp] as she smiled mischievously.

"We have already heard the method from Jack and the others. There will be no problems. So, for that end—"

She pulled out a maid costume from the push cart.

"KuroUsagi will also be transforming into a SUPER maid."

"Aie?"

Revealing a look of dismay, KuroUsagi's rabbit ears jumped as she shouted "what?!".

Part 9

—Branch shop of [ThousandEyes] , Shiroyasha's room.

Dong! The echo of the bamboo colliding on a stone and the elegant sound of water running to refill the bamboo holder.

Shiroyasha was in her own room as she focused her thoughts to make out the movements within the game as a referee. She was using the Gift that was left for her by a comrade of the Community, the gift known as the [Eye of Laplace], to gather the information with help of the many surveillance faeries released in the region. As a type of Communal faerie just like Merun, they were able to use their vision and hearing as information to be transferred back to the base. Originally an object that was entrusted to her to maintain the peace of the region, but in the hands of Shiroyasha who had that sort of interest and personality, it was used more often than not to take stealth videos and to eavesdrop on others.

With that in mind, the use of the Gift for today's street surveillance would be the most appropriate usage in a long time.

"Hohoho. The plan is progressing as intensely as expected. Very Good. Very Good."

Smiling gently as she felt satisfied with the livening up of the streets that were noisy with the intense battle and crowds in the free zone. They of the [Floor Master]s did not only look after the peace of the region but were also in charge the cultural events of their region.

Such as the hosting of Games at regular intervals like this, the opening of a Trial.

"But, not only is there [Kerykeion]... for that rascal Queen, to send the her knight over as well? Where in the world did she hear about the rights to challenge?"

Many generations before, Shiroyasha partook in the trials for the Authorities of the Sun with her White Night Celestial Being form. After many countless games and defeating many Sun gods of the god class levels, she managed to obtain over half of the twenty-four Sun Authorities—fourteen of them.

And [Queen Halloween] was one of her opponents whom she had

fought with a feud that continued for thousands of years.

"It's been a long time since the battle for the Sun sovereignties but she sure does like to find trouble again, huh? That rascal."

Drooping her shoulders as she felt her energy drained by the situation. However, it was not something that she could just ignore as well. If the Queen's knight was truly out in force, the Communities of the Lower Level could never be a match against that individual.

Umu. She folded her arms and hugged her chest as she pondered over it.

[Queen Halloween] was feared by many as a Demon Lord but simultaneously, she's the strongest force behind the Celtic mythologies. Under the Flag of the Queen, there were the knights of the Round Table, priestesses of Light and many similar famous knights, who have gathered to make up the core while gathering many witches and Magic wielders(Druids) who possess an absolute great power, and even many Eudemons who are summoned from across the Veil of the worlds. [20]

The [Floor Master] of the South Side, [Avalon] was also one of those.

Although Queen had the headstrong attitude of causing trouble, but she had the consideration to clean up her mess. And that is the reason for the lack of jurisdiction enforced upon her even after being branded as a Demon Lord.

"Mah, there shouldn't be anyone who would continue to take up the challenge even after knowing that the individual is a Queen's knight, is there? I guess I will just take a look at the situation before making further decisions?"

Shuuuuu~ Giving a peaceful sigh after the sipping of some green tea.

DonDonDon came the sound of running steps and it after that,

"Things, Things are bad, Shiroyasha-sama! The female who was determined to be Queen's Knight... is now the opponent of that [No Name] guy and they are sweeping towards the shop house in their path of destruction.

"Is that true?!"

Puu!! The mouthful of green tea spewed like a fountain.

And it was not long after this that the Branch Store of [Thousand Eyes] was blown apart.

Part 10

"Oi, Did you hear?!"

"Mhm? What is it?"

"OiOiOiOiOi, You really haven't heard of it?! There's a stall that is manned by a group of four very kawaii girls in maid costunes! In maid costumes!! In maid costumes!!!—I say again, okay?! IN. MAID. COSTUMES. Who are starting to tend the stall!!"

"What...did you say….?"

"And one of them is a [Knight of Little Garden] too!!"

"And another is an [Aristocrat of Little Garden]—It's that Moon Rabbit, you know?!!!"

" " " What... What did you say?!!" " "

In an instant, the witnessing of the fight between those two individuals brought about a strong impact to the crowd who saw it.

Part 11

"Ir, Irashaimase! The proxy of the shop, [No Name]'s usage shop is here!!!"

At the corner of the fountain plaza, there appeared to be an exaggeratingly long queue.

The queue that curled in a circle was so long that it gave off an illusion of being a living entity of its own. They were queueing in such an orderly fashion. But what could be the reason for this behaviour— the answer would be at the front of the queue.

"Those, ...Those who are here to make a purchase, please stand quietly in your queue and await to be served!"

" " "YES, ma'am!" " "

Holding a megaphone in hand, the straight black haired maid who was red to the tips of her ears— Kudou Asuka was now feeling very shy about her current get up.

(This skirt is so short...! And why must I wear a maid's clothing...?!)

The prideful financial conglomerate's daughter and the representative of a girl from the Showa period, Kudou Asuka. Under those maid clothings, the young and tender form of her body and those thighs were filled with the charms of a developing girl.

"A shy maid who is scolding...!"

"Praise to the person who thought of it! That person must surely be a genius, right?!"

"ONEMORE! ONEMORE! ONEMORE!"

"You, You guys...! Did you not hear my words to shut up?!"

Using her highest volume to shout into the megaphone. The cheers suddenly fell silent.

For someone who could control the hearts of others with the use of her words, to get everyone in the neat orderly rows was not a problem at all. But her shyness was keeping her from making a

proper judgement.

And the crowd of male customers who had fallen into silence under the power of her words.

But, because of the silence, the fervour of the males were intensely concentrated upon Asuka's maid appearance and made her the focal point for the crowd.

Bathing in the soundless gaze of the enthusiastic crowd that seem to bombard her from all corners, Asuka's face got redder by the moment as she hugged herself while glaring back at them.

(Ugu …… Although it is easy to give the order of "Don't look"...! But if it were so, it might just cause the customers to be turned away…..!!)

It was only that which she wanted to avoid at all costs. But wearing such a sinful maid costume and becoming a focal point for the crowd was too much of a mismatch for the era that Asuka was born into. The miniskirt maid costume was a completely strange culture of another world for the girl of the Showa period.

Enduring her embarrassment as she looked towards the shop.

Within the shop were Kasukabe Yō and Leticia who played the roles of the shop assistants. For the duo who looked physically younger, this sort of skirt length would not be something that would make them feel shy.

Yō was using a faint smile while Leticia gave a charming smile as they sold the various goods that was deposited in their cart. And the rabbit eared maid who was the cashier—KuroUsagi, had transformed from her unwilling attitude to a storm of sincerity as she worked.

"Here's a ka, Kawaii maid shop, and it is only here that you can find it!! If, If you care to have a look, we are also selling goods from the other shops as well!" shouted KuroUsagi who was holding the set of kitchen cutlery and a candle holder as she handed them over to the customer with a dazzling smile.

To be thanked by a smiling KuroUsagi in maid costume who said "Thank you for your patronage, goshujin-sama." And a personal handling of the purchased item as it is handed over the counter, many of the males were already bewitched and were planning to queue up once more for the sake of experiencing such a purchase

for a second time.

Yō and Leticia exchanged a glance as they stifled a laugh at the success of their strategy.

"It sure is surprising. I never expected it to work out so well. It would seem that my goshujin-sama have a talent for business."

"This is all thanks to Leticia and KuroUsagi, Asuka's also very adorable. ... Mhm. Looks like the other goods placed with us from the other stalls would also be swiped clean."

"Aah. And two percent of all the profits collected from the sale of the goods placed with us from the various Communities will also belong to us. If it had been only one or two stalls working with us, we would be far from the victory.... But never did I expect for fifty-four Communities to request for our services."

"That's only to be expected. After all, we have gathered the famous [Knight of Little Garden] and [Aristocrat of Little Garden]. The degree of credibility and anticipation would naturally be higher than the other shops by twice or thrice."

Mu! Yō clenched her fists.

There's no place for their competition. And Leticia could only reply with a wry smile.

Even though they were in a conversation, the goods placed at their stall continued to dwindle in quantity. And within half an hour, the goods that totalled around the quantity of two filled warehouses were completely sold out.

And before the stall of the [No Name]s, there continued to be a large crowd of people even though the goods were all cleaned out and so the four of them gave a simple farewell as they closed the tent to instantly take off into the alleys.

KuroUsagi gave a whoop of excitement as she carried the two woven burlap sacks filled with copper and silver coins.

"This, This is amazing! We actually earned the amount equivalent to the funds for ten years of our Community's activities in a blink of an eye!"

"Okay, Okay, calm down, KuroUsagi. We are only getting two

percent of that pile."

A KuroUsagi who was prancing around in joy at the achievement of earning that unexpected amount of money.

And a Leticia who wore a wry smile as she seem to have given up.

With the energy drained out of her, Asuka swayed her way to lean against a wall as she let out a sigh.

"...it is the worst day ever."

"But Asuka's very kawaii. Well, it's mainly about the characteristics such as how you blush up to the tips of your ears when you get embarrassed."

"Excuse me, just cut it out. I do not want to be reminded of it again."

"But it sure is a praiseworthy feat! If, If we were to use that same method to do It again,"

"How can you propose that we do that again, you bakausagi!!! If you want to do it, then please do it alone!"

Grabbing the rabbit ears of KuroUsagi, Asuka fell into a state of rage as she vented it out in her series of fierce tugs.

Yō, who was smiling as she watched KuroUsagi who was crying pitifully, was alerted by a sound of an explosion and that attracted her attention immediately.

(That explosion just now….. is someone battling it out somewhere?)

Part 12

Simply picking up an iron pillar that has fallen with a hand, Izayoi flung it at the masked knight. And although the masked rider was faced with the incoming iron pillar that travelled at a dumbfounding speed of the third cosmic velocity, the knight only used her spear to singlehandedly strike the end of the iron pillar to change its trajectory with a gentle movement.

Using the minimum amount of force to change the trajectory, the masked knight readied the two swords in her hands without letting up on her defensive position at all. On the other hand, Izayoi maintained his stance in preparation to throw the next metal rod when he suddenly went stiff.

"Tch...!"

The flash of the scorpio serpens sword made a snitch at Izayoi's right leg.

The whip sword that traced a curved trajectory in the air was clearly a weapon that made the trajectories a difficult aspect to be controlled but with just a flick of the masked knight's wrist, six different types of snaking movements were executed as she stalked closer to her prey. Furthermore, that technique was definitely not dependent on a Gift of some sort. It was the result of disciplined training of the martial arts and could be said to be on the more unusual range of the martial art spectrum.

Besides, it was not the only time that his legs were cut in this manner. His legs were peppered with thin cuts that were bleeding. Although every cut had been shallow, but the accumulation of all those were definitely slashing away at Izayoi's mobility. The knight, who did not have the physical prowess of Izayoi's body, was employing this efficient and precise method of whittling away the mobility of those legs with the flash of the sword to close the gap between their agility levels.

(Che... Though it may look like a despicable sneaky move, but I concede that it isn't something that any other guy around can pull off that easily. This is a combat technique that can only be realised through the stupidly persistent hard work of the honing one's martial arts.)

Picking up one of the torn canvases that was the remains of a destroyed stalls, he tied it like a bandage to stop the flow of blood. Although he might have some inner grievances about the progress of the situation, there continued to be a smile hanging by the edge of his lips.

Dual spears, the whip sword that looks like a snake or scorpion's stinger and that rapid fire bow.

Regardless of the type chosen from that list, they were all weapons of an unusual choice. If the individual did not research and refine the training of such skills to the utmost, it is impossible for them to display this level of combat skills. And for the process of an individual to master a martial art by itself, it would already take up a lifetime of training and this masked female had already mastered three.

(YareYare...The world is really a wide place.)

—I did not expect for such a strong martial artists to exist.

Izayoi was harbouring a begrudging respect for the knight.

Izayoi who only depended on his congenital talents was a clear opposite existence to the knight. For one to have overcome the many tiring training sessions that might even make one puke blood, it was clearly a result of an unshakable resolution and goal.

In contrast to the hedonistic Izayoi who preferred to pass his days slothfully, the various techniques executed by the masked knight were the alibis for the time spent hard at trainings.

(Ah, now's not the time to be in admiration for others. I've bleeding too much and my leg is getting heavier. It would be all over if I get another injury.)

Tudtud! Tapping his feet lightly to readjust his thoughts.

On the other hand, due to the unexpectedly difficult opponent, the masked knight was breathing in short ragged breaths and perspiring as her shoulders heaved heavily with each breath. The difference in physical prowess between Izayoi and her body was similar to that of a leopard and a human.And battling against said opponent with such a gap in the physical prowess, she could only execute her incomparably perfect and accurate techniques.

Utilising all the concentration and muscles in the body to be focused on the task of defending and attacking.

The masked knight would be reaching the limits of her body's strength.

(...I would never have thought that there would be such a strong foe residing in the lower levels.)

Honestly, she had harboured the notion of quitting the game before meeting Izayoi.

No, it should be said that she could not do anything else but to withdraw from the game. As one of the Queen's knights who possess great strength, it would be just a matter of an interval to sweep out the other participants if she had the intention to do so.

But she could not do that. Rather than calling it the reserved cool-headedness of the strong, it should be seen as a calculated choice with regards to the atmosphere of the region.

If she had the intention of wreaking havoc in the game—

"Oi, Oi, did you know? I hear that one of the members of [Queen Halloween] is making herself unparalleled in the lower levels!"

"Surely that can't be the case can it? To be serious to the point of making herself unparalleled to those low level opponents, surely that can't be true can it?"

"That masked knight can already be considered as [Queen's knight (lol)]!"

—and many other similar expressions that would run contrary to her intentions would definitely be spread like raging fire.

In the end, she decided to follow the balance of the game to release her strength as she saw fit and to not incur unnecessary wrath. However, holding back her strength was giving her unnecessary stress. Even if it were the solemn carrying out of the tasks as a masked knight, it was also just a matter of time that she would start to feel bored.

And it was at that time that the unexpectedly good opponent appeared. He was none other than Sakamaki Izayoi.

(Initially, I had joined due to my Queen's stubbornness and was disgruntled about it...but this is a really unexpected find.)

It did not matter if one had the finest martial arts if there is no opponent that can resist the fate of being torn to bits in the first execution of the technique. In regards to this point, it was a fortune to have him appear then.

Twisting the whip sword, it retracted the blade segments to form the sword blade's body. Although it was a type of weapon that utilised catch mechanisms in its workings, it was not the workings of a Gift that helped the mechanism to operate.

Knighted as a Queen's knight of [Queen Halloween], one would be bestowed weapons crafted by famous artisans and it would be a masterpiece that utilised various metal with special properties.

And her whip sword was one of those.

The segmented portion of the sword's body was crafted with thousands of extremely fine wire interlinkages reeled within the mechanisms and it enabled the various executions of sword release by maintaining a tight grip on the handle and giving it a twist. Consequently, the serpent scorpion demonic blade would bare its fangs as it strikes like the fangs of a snake and the puncture motions of the scorpion tail.

Currently, when the opponent's mobility was shaved off considerably, it was indeed time to land the fatal strike.

(I will just continue with the choice of the whip sword. And the winner of this battle will be clear by the next bout of exchanges.) Dispelling the spear that she held in the other hand, she gripped the whip sword with both hands.

Meanwhile, Izayoi who detected the sharp shift in the atmosphere started to have a fierce grin that grew across his lips as he looked at the masked knight.

"Deciding to crown the victor with the next move? Good, I was thinking about that as well... but before that, could you please introduce yourself, o' knight-sama? If we were to end this off without knowing each other's identities, it would be quite pity for this game."

"... May I hear of yours?"

The masked knight at the opposite end nodded her head quietly. To tell the truth, she was also curious. And her thoughts were betting on which famous Community could such a strong opponent belong to and that it can only belong to some larger organisation as well.

Izayoi placed a hand at his hip while using the other to point at his own chest.

"My name is Sakamaki Izayoi—- of the [No Name]."

"……. [No Name]? You?"

"Aahh. We have this Jin Russel who is similar to a calling card as our leader. Remember that well okay? —Well then, what would be your name, o'knight-sama?"

Not bothered by the fact that he was referred to as the denigrated master status, Izayoi gave a carefree laugh.

To avoid misunderstandings, it is not that she had any haughty opinions when she repeated that denigrated master status.

It is just that she had this thought then. They shared a curious thing in common.

"—A knight under the direct command of [Queen Halloween], Third seat of the [Queen's Knights], my knighted name by the Queen is [Faceless]."

Discarding her robes, the masked knight shouted her own introduction. It is only then did Izayoi saw the full appearance of the knight who was hidden from view all those times.

A flawlessly pure white gown and armour with a fiery red masquerade mask. The reflected sun rays that strike upon the swaying white hair immediately gave off a silvery radiance that seemed to give a saint-like vibe.

Facing the masked knight, whose ponytail swayed in the wind while being tied back in a black ribbon, Izayoi gave a barking laugh.

"Ha, [No Name] and [No Face]?! This sure is a curious meeting, it is very coincidental indeed! We as members who have lost the things to represent us... can only use our strengths to proof our worth right —!!!"

Pounding and cracking the ground as he went, he dashed forth in a surprise attack while sending the remains of the shops into the air.

Mirroring his actions, Face.Less was still using her sepens scorpio sword that flashed while she backed away from the assault.

The last portion of the battle was bound on the path of becoming the most intense battle.

Knowing that this was their last, the duo rampaged freely in the free zone.

Smashing through stalls, destroying property that is unfortunate to be in their paths and causing the ground to explode like it were full of land mines. And in the midst of all these, for it to have no injured onlookers was already a sort of miracle.

Izayoi who wanted to close the distance to continue his barrage of attacks and Faceless who wanted to pull away to make space for her attacks and defence.

Although the change in mobility levels was advantageous for Faceless, but Izayoi wasn't only fooling around earlier.

The demonic sepens scorpio sword that attacked from all directions.

It wasn't as though the sword had unlimited patterns for its trajectories. And Izayoi can predict the trajectory of the blade and can be said to be on the upper hand against Faceless.

(If it works out like my guess, the bladed body's interlinkage mechanisms are controlled by the handle of the sword. Since I can't see through the tricks of the sword's body traced trajectories with my eye, it only leaves the option of watching the movement of the wrist...!)

Whenever the whip sword executed an extension or contraction, it would be based on the movements at the fingers. On first glance, it was difficult to tell but there seemed to be 5 ring like designs on the handle portion. And with the squeezing of the hoop that corresponds to the respective finger position, the sword would give a flashing movement as if it were a living thing.

Knowing that her sword blade trigger mechanisms were seen through by the opponent, Faceless had a little cold sweat starting for herself.

(The patterns for the sword extension and contractions have been seen through... the time has been dragged too long...!)

Even so, it did not change her combat strategy. Having made the oath to herself to pull through as the victor, she had chosen her beloved sword for the battle. Then, she should believe in that oath and her judgement to succeed.

Sensing that strong determination in her, Izayoi was also thinking about ending the game too.

"Here it comes, o'Queen's knight— can that whip sword of yours defend you from this—?!"

Izayoi grabbed the bottom portion of the structure that he was standing beside and used an overwhelming brute force to lift up the ground. The surroundings started to tremor as the huge shadow fell over the area.

At this point, even Faceless was caught by surprise.

No matter how one saw it, the lifted structure's possible routes of travel would only be in one direction.

(Could it be..... he really wants to throw that entire residential building over—?!!)

It was just as she thought.

Izayoi sent the huge structure that was multiple times larger than himself hurtling towards Faceless at the Third Cosmic velocity.

"Tch!"

Giving the whip sword's handle a press to extend the sword's reach to the maximum. The structure that was hurled at her was already starting its disintegration process just from the force of the throw and the huge scatter shot closed in upon Faceless.

But, even though it is another scatter shot like the previous moves, this scale of dodging would be different.

It wasn't the small pellet form of scatter shots but each piece was around the size of a boulder.

In this case, it would not be possible to use the same tactic of slightly changing the trajectories and one could only hope to use all

their might to continue dodging while destroying those in their path.

(But, is it possible to defend against this...?!)

Using the longest reach of her whip sword to continuously crack and slash through the huge rubble. But with just those movements alone, it was indeed insufficient. Faceless backed off while continuing to dodge.

Although it was just an instant that she was doing these actions, the sense of time within Faceless had sped up by a few thousand beats per second.

She no longer executed her cuts and slashes based on her visual senses. But she was calculating the trajectories of the shattered fragments and unleashing a barrage of attacks in the future locations of the debris.

Not allowing herself to have a single error in judgement. But it was impossible for her to err. The sword skills that were polished to the highest limits were bound to pull her through any difficulties.

Boulder like debris that should be cut were cut and those that were supposed to be dodged were dodged.

Faceless indeed predicted the next moment in advance.

But precisely because of that, that moment was the instant that decided the victor.

"—Found it, your blindspot."

Faceless's body tensed in surprise but that was only to be expected.

For Sakamaki Izayoi had stepped out from the shadow of a boulder that she had dodged.

(But this is still manageable—I can still make it to retract the blades to attack!)

"Do you think I will let you?!"

The collision of the congenital talented punch and the disciplined arts of the sword.

And with just a step before her, Izayoi's punch came into contact

with the pure white gown and in that instant— The both of them were swallowed up by the debris which also destroyed the front door of [Thousand Eyes].

Part 13

"Are you STUPPPPPPPPPPPPIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIDDDDDDDDDDDD???!!!"

Pak～～～～!!! Shiroyasha's special custom made folded fan was waving furiously.

Pointing at the town that was torn up and devastated by the fight between Izayoi and Faceless, Shiroyasha was in the rare occasion of being really angry. Izayoi pouted his lips as he was made to sit in a seiza position, despite his unwillingness.

If you were wondering why, it is because a certain other person who should be around to share the lecture was not at the scene in this moment.

"...Damn. That bastard masked knight actually escaped before me. Isn't it a shared responsibility to be here at this sort of situation?"

"Oi, the destruction of the streets were 80% of your doing isn't it?! Let's just say that it is the game's stage and having a little damage to it is inevitable, but shouldn't there be a limit to things?! And it isn't like you aren't old enough to understand these stuff, you big idiot!"

"Uu, but, for the battle between me and that knight to be only of this extent is already a very good thing right?"

"Hmph. Of course. Let's not start with you for now. She was being very attentive to limiting the damage to the surroundings when she battled."

"...what did you just say?"

"Just think about it a little will you? When you hurled objects at her, she would always change the trajectory to hand in a direction where no one would be standing right? A professional like her would only need to dodge the object in the first place."

Isn't that right? Shiroyasha gave him a chiding stare.

But the truth rather than the tone was what made Izayoi feel the chills.

"To actually have the capacity of mind to consider the

surroundings.... In that sort of battle...?"

"Mhm. Although it isn't like she spared you from her worst, but it is unquestionable that she was able to battle with that sort of considerations. And though she might be the subordinate of my sworn enemy, it is a really commendable knightly spirit. A martial artist of that calibre isn't that common to meet on the streets. — With that in mind, isn't it a good learning process for you?"

Flicking open her folded fan of the twin goddess design, she covered her smile as she watched Izayoi. On the other hand, Izayoi who sat in the seiza position was wearing a complex expression as he could not find words to express his thoughts and he scratched his head unhappily.

"...Che. It was tough for me to win that game and so what if I get this sense of feeling that I've lost? Damn, this sure is hard for me to accept."

"That is just the fault of your pride. ... Mah, there will come a day when you two will meet again. Now, now, compared that sort of thing—"

Donk Shiroyasha shook some ash from her red smoke pipe.

And a piece of sheepskin parchment lightly floated down to land beside Izayoi's hand.

Picking up the sheepskin parchment in surprise, Izayoi's lips started to tremble slightly.

"...Oi, Shiroyasha-sama. What is this? This extremely large sum of fines."

"This is the compensation for the damages this time. Destruction of the streets, residential property, stalls that were smashed and for the destruction of the main door of my Community, the [ThousandEyes]. So, please kindly prepare the amount as stated."

A smiling Shiroyasha that did not have the smile extended to the gaze.

Izayoi raised his hands as he gave a bitter laugh at the thought of how it had been a very unfortunate day while looking up at the skies above.

Part 14

— It was the time when the festival had ended and the streets were dyed with the hues of the setting sun.

In the middle of the vermillion streets, KuroUsagi was crying in a loud and exaggerated fashion.

"Iza…. Izayoi –san you big idiot, big idiot, super big big IDIOOOOT～～!!!"

PakPakPakPakPakPakPakPakPakPak!

And it was accompanied by the flurry of sounds that came from the repeated smacking of the folded fan against Izayoi's head.

Unlike his usual self, Izayoi did not dodge the beating and was receiving it obediently this time.

"It, It was such a difficult chance to come by... Actually it is all thanks to everyone that we could get this sum of funds for our reconstruction efforts...! And just to pay of the finds would leave us back to where we started..."

"....That's right. It was a rare chance for us to have gotten such a big victory in this game of competing interests, and now the pile of golden plates that were supposed to be our compensation for the participation will now be confiscated."

"Mhm. Orginally, we were expecting to give a treat for everyone to eat a scrumptious meal. And this time, it really is unforgivable, no matter what it may be."

"...I'm sorry. I have no excuses."

Asuka and Yō sighed as though they had given up while KuroUsagi's face was really awash with tears.

Leticia had a troubled smile as she was the only one who stepped in then.

"Mah, Mah, let's just leave it. Anyways, it was just some easy money. It comes easily and goes easily. Even if we were to use that sort of easily earned money to help with the reconstructions, it

wouldn't have meant much would it?"

"Well, ...perhaps you are right on that."

Mu! Asuka pouted her lips. But giving it further thought, if the money earned from wearing that miniskirt maid costume were to be successful, that sort of accomplishment would be a story that would be passed down for generations to come would it?

Reflecting on that possibility, it might just be a good ending for them.

"But let's take it as a favour from us okay? It is something that everyone here is giving to Izayoi, right?"

"Mhm. No matter when it may be, I will return the favour when I can."

"But in the end, what is the grand prize of this game? Although it seems that [Kerykeion] is the winner and all."

"Mhm? Aahh, what are you bothered about? Even though you have figured out the underlying competition between the commercial powers, you still haven't figured that part out?"

"...Then if you put it that way, it would seem that Izayoi, you have figured it out already?"

I'm guessing that he did. She then unfurled the paper which the girls group had jotted down all the observation points about the game that were tidied thus far.

The Gift Game <RaimundusLullus> is one that uses the contents for the Gold transmutation technique, the "Alchemy of Gold". The victory will go to the person who gathers the seven pieces of Golden Plates. [Willo'wisp] seems to have figured out the rewards and deemed it to be of no use. The large scale Communities of [Kerykeion] and [Queen Halloween] have joined the fray. From the points of 3 and 4, it would be plausible to speculate that the prize is something that will not matter unless it is given to a large scale Community. "And the biggest clue of all is the participation of [Kerykeion]. That group is a commerce focused Community that is famous as a part of the gods group in this world and the outside world as well. Even the crest of the famous Japanese University that offers courses on economics uses this logo. As long as it is a person related to that group of people, it can be assured that it isn't just a

normal authority right?"

"...Right. But isn't giving it further thought a very difficult task to do?"

"You are right on that too. So what comes next will only be my speculation... Ojou-sama, Kasukabe, there's still one more important clue that hasn't been used in that paper for your discussion. —Do you know what it is?"

"...,"

"... ."

"Okay, times up. The answer is "gold transmutation"."

Izayoi replied with a mischievious smile.

Instantly, Asuka muttered as though she had caught onto something.

"—gold transmutation...transmutation…transaction... Gold moulding? Could it be the rights to investing in the gold minting of [ThousandEyes]?!"

"Aahh. As expected of ojou-sama of the financial conglomerates. That is a really good guess there."

Haha Laughing as he followed it up with a supplement to explain.

"It could also be the start of a new currency and the subsequent issuing rights. [Queen Halloween] seem to want the rights from Shiroyasha and it is said that in the past, the permeation of faith is similar to the permeation of currency. So Queen-sama might have wanted to stick her foot into the battle for the market."

"Ha~... So that's why Queen decided to send her knight down to the lower levels?"

"That's right. And that means it was me who beat back the Queen's knight and prevented the potential erosion of our markets by the Demon Lord."

Indeed, that's the case! Leticia raised her hands in admiration.

Izayoi laughed in his good mood as he retrieved the last remaining piece of the gold plate out from his Gift Card to pass it to KuroUsagi

who was sobbing uncontrollably.

"But... it is really embarrassing but this is the only one left. This is the golden plate that I won from the Queen's knight-sama. I hope that it can help out with our living expenses somewhat."

"...Yes. Continuing the lecture would be meaningless. Let's just forget it this time."

"Well, if you can do that, it would really be helpful. Otherwise— This invitation letter would be wasted."

—Aie? KuroUsagi straightened her rabbit ears as she gave a dazed voice.

Held in Izayoi's hand was an invitation letter that was sealed with the wax stamp of a Great tree design.

And the recipient was addressed to [No Name]'s Jin Russel-sama.

"That, That's ... the Harvest Festival of South Side, District of the water and Great Tree! The invitation to [Underwood's Great Waterfall]?! Why, Why would there be such a valuable invitation?!"

"Shiroyasha passed it to me. It seems like it is an invitation mailed from an alliance called [Draco Greif] who wishes for us to participate as their guests."

Guests— That is a term that did not include the normal participants, but one that is reserved for the important guests who would be entertained warmly.

And it was a treatment that a person of the denigrated term of [No Name] could not even dream of.

Izayoi, Asuka, Yō, Leticia and KuroUsagi were cheerful as they held the invitation.

"For us to receive an invitation to have a guest treatment...?! It must be the news of everyone's accomplishments of having defeated the Demon Lord reaching the ears of the South side!"

Ya～～? Behind KuroUsagi who was in her state of joy, Asuka, Yō and Leticia were also wearing a smile.

"Yeah, that should be it. Even for the commotion this time, I guess introducing my name and association might be a good thing."

"...Although we are unable to have a scrumptious meal."

"That's nothing. If we were to attend the Harvest Festival of the South Side, there will be delicacies that will naturally fill you to the brim. This will be just a small matter, my master."

And standing before the group that were grinning to each other, Izayoi opened the invitation letter to announce.

"The next stage for the [No Name] will be —South Side, the Waterfall in the district of the water and Great Tree. Let's brighten up and proceed with the preparations!"

Exchanging hi-fives with each other, the group started to walk back to their home.

With regards to the different world, the new stages and new meetings continued to bring them excitement that raced their hearts.

Translator's Notes

1. ↑ [BionicMeerkat note - In case you forgot, Usagi = Rabbit & Mimi = Ears.
2. ↑ [magrefnotes: In Japanese, the “Drought(Kanbatsu)” sounds similar to the Kan Batsu. Eh, when I translate it back to Jap, it looks so obvious… It is the HanBa in Chinese, and I used the term HanBa during the translations of volume 5. It has the names of Hiderigami(god of drought), Kanbo(drought mother), KanBatsu(Drought Demon) where ‘Kan’ is ‘drought/ dry’ and ‘Batsu’ is most likely Demon.]
3. ↑ [magrefnotes: the ‘You must work hard okay?’ can be reverted back to the ‘Gambatte’, if I’m not wrong.]
4. ↑ [magrefnotes: Heat haze is the phenomenon when there is a layer of heated air surrounding the object that our eyes are trying to see. This causes a mirage whereby the object looks blurry. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirage%5D]
5. ↑ [magrefnotes: all things will come to an end, there is no permanence.]
6. ↑ [magrefnotes: The strong eat and the weak get eaten]
7. ↑ [magrefnotes: from ch notes, the Japanese pronunciation of ‘exchange’ and ‘turn back’ have the same initial

pronunciation.]

8. ↑ [BionicMeerkat note - You know the drill, Kitsune = Fox & Mimi = Ears]
9. ↑ [magrefnotes:According to Wikipedia, edible lye is a liquid obtained by leaching ashes to produce a strong alkali solution for the curing of food.]
10. ↑ [magrefnotes:many many is not my typo it was doubled so I just directly doubled it too. thanks to commentor shorty for suggestion :]]
11. ↑ [magrefnotes: Takenoko->bamboo shoots, gohan->rice. Bamboo shoot Rice. A seasonal spring dish in Japan]
12. ↑ [magrefnotes: my guess is Jin, Leticia, Kuro Usagi in that sequence for the conversation, but it is not written.]
13. ↑ [magrefnotes: yaoyorozu no kami literally translates into the 8 million gods of the Shinto religion. Omikami refers to Amaterasu omikami.]
14. ↑ [magrefnotes: Raimundus Lullus (1235~1316), one of his works is the <<The mystery of Mother Nature: the Fifth Element>>. In theory, alchemy only recognises the four big elements and so this 'fifth element' was deemed to be the Philosopher's stone. At the same time, Lullus was the first to attempt the assimilating of the Cabbala into the theories of alchemy. This Cabbala should refer to the Tree of Life.]
15. ↑ [magrefnotes: I used DaiMaou because it seems weird to say it as Big Demon Lord when she's most likely going to be some loli demon lord judging by the author's preference.]
16. ↑ [magrefnotes:I changed it to E although the primary translated text says B: the Strength possessor, this is to fit in with the sequence spelled out earlier in this story. Rezel: It truly "E". 参加資格Ｅ：力ある者。]
17. ↑ [magrefnotes: I would like to point out that KuroUsagi's ears are really lousy…]
18. ↑ [magrefnotes: Free Zones would refer to the zones not controlled by a particular Community]
19. ↑ [magrefnotes: The author takes an interesting perspective, obedience of a knight is similar to obedience of a servant. Can't deny that myself. :o]
20. ↑ [magrefnotes: Quotes jogelotr:" If we suppose that this is the rendering of Japanese 光の神子, then it would be a girl (it would translate as "priestess of light"), and a quick search shows that a figure with that name is very common in modern japanese fiction (mainly LN, WN and games), but with no relation whatsoever among the characters other than its position as messengers, servants or protegées of a divinity

related with light (well, some are power posessors able to use light)". Well, I'm using his explanation because it seems better than leaving it as the raw form. Though I would have wanted to find a Celtic person with a specific name, it does seem likely that the term is not a title of an individual and just a general term for a category. So there it is. Priestesses of Light :)]

Chapter 3 - Candle, Omelette Cake and Ghost Town

Part 1

—North Side, Outer Gate number 678900, Pumpkin Street

A week before the Harvest Festival of [Underwood], Ayesha the Ignis Faatus was heading back with a light bounce to her steps.

This was due to her excitement about having completed the preparation of the Gift Game which would be hosted by [Will O' Wisp].

(*Everything will be in place after we complete the finishing touches on the decorations! And we will just have to wait for the players to come over for the start of the main event.*)

Ayesha had a smile on her face as she swayed her green hair which was tied into twin tails. An assortment of different sized candle stands and azure flame lamps paved the sidewalks of the brick street. And these were made from the big pumpkin shells that were their Community's farm produce. The pumpkin's flesh had been carved out and the lighting was made by Jack and Ayesha herself.

(*It would be great if we can have a lively hosting for this round……*)

Ayesha gazed at the stage that she built.

The Community of [Will O' Wisp] took the motto of "To enjoy hosting a Gift Game more than the fun from being a player" very seriously. If they were to win the Game that they hosted, that would be for the best, but it must be with the precondition of allowing both the host and the players to have a great time in the process. It is precisely because of the enjoyable games that they create, that leaves a good feeling no matter if one were to lose or win in the results, participants continue to return to participate in their subsequent games.

(*But, this time, we have also sent an invitation to those [No Name]s. We should not only enjoy ourselves but I will have to show them the might of this Great Ayesha-sama!*)

FuaHaHaHaHa! She puffed her small chest as she gave a loud silly laugh.

Returning to her Community's main building, she entered through the main door with gusto and strode to her own room.

And standing before her room where she placed her hand on the doorknob, there was this strange sensation to the pressure exerted by her hand.

Kacha Kacha, she tried to turn the doorknob. But it was locked and would not open.

Reaching her hand into her clothes pocket to find the key. But she could not find it.

No, the key should still be in the room in the first place, but why

would the door be locked in that case—-

“—Ah, Asuka. This plush teddy bear is so cute.”

“Ara, that’s right. On closer look, it seems to be handmade too. Could this be made by Ayesha herself as well?”

“Who knows? But her taste is quite interesting, right?”

“I agree. ……But let’s just place it aside for now, that snack box hidden behind the plush teddy bear is giving off a really good fragrance—“

The coloration of blood immediately drained from Ayesha’s face.

The two voices which she had no idea about how they could have gotten in there was giving Ayesha the intense chills.

—Just saying on the side, the snack box that Asuka was opening was one that contained the famous tarts filled with golden yam that was the local produce of the [Salamandra]’s territory. And it was the most popular No.1 high quality snack that any North Side girl would want to have a bite into.

“OiOiOiOiOiOi I say Oi!!? Barging into the rooms of other people and opening the box of the highest grade snack, where did you burglars come from huh?! I demand that you open the door right now you bastards!!!”

“Ara, I hear that it is a snack of the highest grade, Kasukabe-san.”

“Mhm. My anticipation is growing.”

Kapak

“Open the door quickly nowwwwww!!!”

“Ara, it seems like someone’s outside and the door can’t open.”

“Mhm. Then, we can only finish it between us.”

The duo immediately set themselves to work on the preparation of their tea party. Whereas the one outside was still knocking furiously *DonDonDonDong* at the door and unable to stop the duo.

It was the epitome of wasting one’s efforts. Realizing that this method was not effective in stopping the problem children, Ayesha

furiously rushed down to the safe located downstairs to get another spare key. But,

“Come to think about it, Asuka, where did you get the rope that is now tied in the doorway?”

“Aahh, I thought it would be useful when I found it while clearing the rubble in [No Name]’s territories.”

“How prepared are you guys to do things like thissss!!?”

Ayesha shouted in despair. And the sounds of loud munching traveled through the door.

With the dessert, which she purchased with the little pocket money that she had, taken from her, Ayesha hung her head in despair.

But that extent was not enough to stop the two problem children.

“……Asuka.”

“Yes?”

“There is this self-composed poetry collection with accompanying illustrations ……. At the bottom of this snack box.”

Hyea! Ayesha was immediately revived.

That's bad. That's really bad. That was the treasure trove that she hid her maiden secrets and her dark histories of embarrassing pubescent thoughts. If it were to be seen, it would be a dark grimoire that would surely send the readers into a fit of laughter.

"You…. You guys……!!!"

Ayesha used her last ounces of strength to grip the door knob tightly as she cried out with tears streaking down her cheeks.

"You guys just get out of there okaaaaaaaayyyyy——!!!!!"

Part 2

To have caused Ayesha to cry for real, even if it were Asuka and Yō, they were currently reflecting upon their actions in earnest.

Ayesha had joined the tea party with Asuka and the others in the living room but her cheeks were still puffy.

Exchanging a glance with each other, Yō and Asuka gave a troubled smile at this current headache-inducing situation.

“Really now, we were only playing around. No matter what the case might be, we wouldn’t be that boneheaded to go to that extent, right?”

“What we were eating were only our packed bentos you know. See, Ayesha, your snacks are still in intact and safe in the box.”

“Of course!”

Hmph, puffing her cheeks as she turned her head aside.

After that, the duo had taken a long time to coax Ayesha to return to her calmness as they started the discussion on the game details.

“Come to think of it, Ayesha, regarding the game that you have extended the invitation to us, what sort of activity is that?”

“…….Hmph. Before arriving at our main building, there is this Pumpkin street right? That is a land that was originally a waste land that we renovated into a Ghost town.”

“A small town for wandering spirits?”

Asuka and Yō exclaimed in doubt at the same time and Ayesha who was satisfied by their reactions, finally got herself together to smile as she taunted the duo.

“I can’t tell any of the details…… but the main portion of the game is to find me or Jack-san. Just that it will be too difficult for you guys. Till date, there hasn’t been anyone who could do that. Thanks to that, the luxurious prizes that we always prepare beforehand is now covered in a layer of dust.”

HmHmph. Ayesha gave a haughty throaty laugh.

But hearing Ayesha's words, the gazes of the duo took a turn as they exchanged a look with each other.

"Is that so…… we can keep the luxurious prizes, is it?"

"Hehe. Sounds like a good thing."

They gave a confident response to Ayesha's taunt and Ayesha was motivated to stand up,

"The Game will begin tonight when the moon is at the zenith of the sky. Just wait at the main building before the time and you will be fine."

"Got it. Then let's stay in Ayesha's room,"

"No way!"

Ayesha rejected immediately.

For a while, Asuka and Yō enjoyed the company of each other in silence as they sipped at their red tea and they sighed before speaking up once more.

"A luxurious prize…… what could it be?"

"No idea. But [Will O' Wisp] is a Community of the six digits. For her to praise it that much, it would be a prize that matches their worth. And if we can get that, it will definitely count towards the efforts to attend the Harvest Festival in advance."

The duo exchanged a glance and nodded their heads.

That was their goal.

The Community that the duo belonged to, [No Name], was currently holding a game that pitted the battle prizes of the comrades against each other. According to the results that are won in the next few days allocated to them, it would determine the number of days for them to participate in the [Underwood] Harvest Festival.

"Surprisingly, Izayoi is still without a prize so far…… this game might just be our biggest chance."

“……Mhm. That just leaves the battle where it will decide who of us will get through.”

Yō nodded her head nervously. Asuka was puzzled by the nerves that Yō was feeling as it was never shown that explicitly before, but that was something that she had to put aside for now as she had to save her energy and recharge during the wait for the upcoming game.

Part 3

—Stage area in Outer Gate number 678900, Pumpkin Street

It is one of the few territories of [Will O' Wisp]. After all, there exists multiple [FloorMaster]s in the North Side and hence most of the lands were directly under the charge of the [FloorMaster]'s territory.

Originally, [Will O' Wisp] possessed the might to be active as a six digit [FloorMaster], but their territory only comprised of this stage area, the main building and the glass treatment work rooms. And because of the location of this Outer Gate being closer to the West of the North Side, the veil that blocks the cold is slightly weaker and the warmth from the autumn temperature inducing chandeliers is a far way off from here, leading to a cool breezy day throughout.

And the abandoned houses were also the result of the residents who shifted away for the same reason.

To join up with the realm of control that was exerted by the larger and stronger Alliances of [Salamandra] and [OniiHime].

[Will O' Wisp] then renovated those abandoned houses into their stage area.

The buildings of the North Side were highly resistant brick houses, were not easily eroded and it was only natural to put them to good use.

The small Ghost town was lit with the azure glow of the candles which complemented the atmosphere of the game.

Walking to the location as stated in the invitation card, Asuka and Yō followed the other players to the doors of the game stage.

And it was then that the question floated up in their minds as they noted the characteristics of their rivals.

"A total of two hundred contestants. Although the player count is much more than I expected…… but they are mostly youths."

"Rather than calling them youths, you might as well call them the young."

Yes. The players averaged around the teenage population and there were even children who were younger than Yō, waiting to participate in the game. The oldest contestants were most probably only two to three years above the duo's age.

Although there were many different species living in the world of Little Garden and it was not necessarily possible to determine the age based on appearances alone, it can be seen that the population that appeared to be youthful weren't in the small numbers.

Asuka scrunched her eyebrows in suspicion but that soon melted away when Ayesha appeared atop the gate of Pumpkin Street.

Ayesha held a large stack of [Geass Rolls],

"Sorry for the wait everyone! We will be passing around the [Geass Roll] of [CandletheTown] now, please get a copy for yourselves!"

Pashaa Asuka and Yō who got a copy of the [Geass Roll] immediately focused their gazes at the contents.

"— Name of Gift Game: "CandletheTown"—

Requisites for Participation::

***Cost of participation is a bronze coin issued by the [ThousandEyes] mint. (Free for those below the age of 10.)**

***Participants must be below the age of adulthood.**

***Participants must possess an invitation card from [Will O' Wisp] .**

Conditions for the players' victory::

***Obtain a gem from the wandering lantern shikigamis in this Ghost town.**

***Different Gifts will be rewarded in accordance to the type of gem. (One Gift per participant only.)**

***The special Gift will be presented to the individual who**

obtains the gem from Jack O' Lantern.

Conditions for the player's defeat::

***Being unable to obtain a gem in the time limit of an hour.**

Oath: Based on our glory and flag, and respecting the above content, [Will O' Wisp] hosts this Gift Game.

"Stamp of [Will O' Wisp]"

Reading through it once, the duo blinked and exchanged a look.

"Erm, I guess we now know the reason for the large numbers of children…… but what is it referring to by the term lantern shikigamis?"

"It's probably those bipedal walking candles or lanterns that we have seen during the Birth of the Fire Dragon Festival……?"

The duo tilted their heads in confusion.

And seeming in the attempt to dispel their confusion, Ayesha lifted up a lantern of the size of a head as she introduced it to the players.

"This is a common foot soldier of the bipedaled walking lanterns. There will be a gem placed within each of them and there's a total of five different types. Basically, the bigger lantern heads will have better Gifts prepared for you, so try your best to catch them."

"Lantern~?"

The kawaii lantern shikigami waved at the crowd and Ayesha fell silent.

After a short pause, Ayesha gave a pointed look at Asuka and Yō—

"— Just saying this in advance, regarding the individual who successfully get hold of the gem that is held in Jack O' Lantern's hand, he or she will be presented the highest Gift that we have prepared— the Gift with the flag of [Will O' Wisp] carved upon it

that has the capability of storing and providing fire.”

Looking toward the huge candle lamp that Ayesha pointed out to them, the crowd of contestants erupted into a roar of cheers. Asuka and Yō were also starting at the lamp with sparkling eyes.

“That is a lamp capable of storing fire……!”

The lad who stood beside the huge candle holder placed the firewood in upon receiving the cue to do so and a blaze was soon burning away in the candle holder.

The region that was supposed to be a little chilly was simultaneously warmed up by the blaze of the candle.

Although the heat was incomparable to the chandelier of the enormous Veil boundary, but it was evidently able to store a comparatively good amount of heat. Asuka clasped her hands together as she stared at the candle holder like a predator who had spotted its prey.

“Not only is it able to store, but if it is able to provide as well…… that will be a much needed source of heat for the Community. It will be enough if we can get even one of those.”

“Mhm. This Gift is surely the best pick for our competition of war trophies."

Yō clenched her fists tightly and Asuka was growing more surprised by the moment at the range of unusual emotions displayed by Yō. But, Asuka assumed that it was because of Yō’s growing enthusiasm about the event.

Ayesha who leapt down from the frame of the gates turned to look up at the thin crescent moon in the sky[1] as she counted the time for the start of the event. And perhaps as the time was getting closer, Ayesha broke away from the crowd of contestants to walk into the Ghost town where she raised her right hand.

“—Okay, the time is now, Jack-san! Let’s run with all our might from the contestants tonight!”

And that was the announcement to flag off the event while a huge fire ball had simultaneously appeared from a previously empty space.

The spherical inferno narrowed at the front like a spinning top and pulled Ayesha's hand, helping her to scramble to the top of the ball of fire. Following a dispersion of fiery particles, a loudly laughing pumpkin appeared from within.

"—Yahohohohohoho! Welcome everyone to the Community Decreed festival[2] of [Will O' Wisp] tonight! The kids can chase after the small lanterns while the other contestants are invited to chase after the larger lanterns and me, this pumpkin head!"

"Mah, just that it will be very difficult for you guys to catch me!"

The tattered cloth around Jack's body flapped in the wind as Ayesha stuck out her tongue to taunt the others.

Soon after the taunt, they surrounded themselves with flames and disappeared instantly without a trace.

Realizing that this was the signal for the start of the game, the contestants started to sound the alert to set off with their shouts.

"Don't bother with the small lanterns! Those will only give sweets to pacify the children!"

"The target is the biggest lanterns! As long as they are of a diameter of 10 feet and above, it will be well worth our efforts already!"

"Targeting the Jack will be a waste of time and energy! Just look for the slowest moving lanterns!"

The participants were hollering an exuberant start and if Jack is honest about it being a Community decreed event, it would mean that there would be veterans who have participated in this challenge in the previous times that it was hosted too. And in the chilly North Side, the Gifts that Jack created would be highly enticing. But this was also true for the [No Name]s as well.

Having the upper hand in mobility, Yō whipped up a whirlwind to leave Asuka behind.

"Sorry, I will make a move first!"

"Ara, that's fine by me! Because, I will be catching up very soon!"

Asuka raised her wine red Gift Card as she summoned the Gift that she possessed— The red sacred iron giant.

And the red metal doll, summoned from the magic circle without runic symbols, gave a majestic roar .

“————DEEEEEeeeeeEEEEEEN!!!”

“We will only be targeting Jack! Let’s go, Deen!”

Following its master’s orders, Deen broke through the gates as it moved into the playing field. And the other contestants were frantically running to give space to this red metal doll that scared them with its sudden appearance.

Asuka was having cold sweat as she prayed for the carefulness of Deen’s step to not crush any children by accident but having Yō gain a head start on herself, there was no reason for Asuka to dally any longer. With Asuka giving constant command to the doll to pay attention to its footing, they charged into the Ghost town.

Part 4

Yō's actions were very fast. Searching for Jack in the skies, she started to use her overwhelmingly potent five senses to track her target. The Gift that she possessed, the [GenomeTree], allowed her to utilise various abilities of the beasts. The disappearance of Jack in an instant did not mean that his presence was hidden.

Yō's sense of smell soon discovered the location of Jack and Ayesha.

Watching from above, Yō dropped sharply in a direct descent to launch an attack at Jack and Ayesha.

"Jack, I found you……!"

"Yaho?!"

Maintaining the velocity of her descent, her kick made direct contact and passed into the ground of the brick laid streets. The sense of accomplishment swept through Yō's mind as she successfully pulled off the ambush.

But the opponent is not someone who would be done in so easily.

Although the pumpkin head was violently knocked off, a closer look would have made it clear that he was not hurt at the slightest. If that pumpkin head was not bashed in, the gem would still be hidden within. And that led to a sense of anxiety that welled within Yō.

"How is that……! Even with that force just now, it's still undamaged,"

"Hng, Hnghng~ Jack-san won't be that easily damaged by that level of attack you know?!"

"Yahoho! Although the attack really came as a surprise to me! But that level of attack will just be instantly repaired!"

Even after being sent flying, Jack continued to laugh cheerfully while Ayesha did seem a little more humbled in her tone.

But giving it more thought, this was only to be expected. The reason for Jack's one-up on Yō's rivalry scores is due to his

immortality.

Jack, who is cursed to wander the boundaries of life and death by Saint Peter, did not have the concept of destruction to shackle him.

Although he was now materialized in the current plane in the form of a demon by Willa the Ignis Fatuus, he is still supposed to be unable to walk the lands of the living.

Yō who exerted all her strength to launch that kick was still unable to beat that recovery speed and she had an ashamed expression as she watched the two smiling opponents before her.

But in the next moment, a fierce roar erupted from the back of an abandoned house.

“Do it now, Deen!”

“DEEEEEeeeeeEEEEEEN!!!”

A thick wrist closed in from the opposite end of the wall. Initially it was thought that Jack was taken off guard once again but it was actually the reverse. He had pretended to be careless to lure the snake out of the hole, to get Asuka to reveal herself.

“Yahohohoho! That’s too naive, Asuka-san! Too naive!”

Jack gave a cheerful laugh as he dodged the attack and disappeared with the conjuring of a blinding blaze. Asuka gave a small click of her tongue as she searched her surroundings for his presence but to no avail.

Anxiety was growing within Asuka as she gave a small sigh.

“This is bad…… If he continues to weave around and flee around the town, an hour will just pass in the blink of an eye……!”

Moreover, Asuka had no means to track him down. The ambush just now was just coincidental with her prepared ambush location for Jack to fly by. And it is unlikely to be that lucky a second time.

Although searching for the blaze that would be swaying from side to side with the light of the candle was going to push at the feasibility of being a battle plan, there seemed to be no other better option open for her.

“I guess that’s the only way….. I will just have to find another place

to set my ambush—”

“—Asuka.”

Yō called out to the back of the leaving figure, who was preparing to chase after Jack, Asuka.

Wanting to ask what is it all about as she turned her head, Asuka noted the unprecedented serious and desperate look on Yō’s face which stopped her short and she could not help but to swallow her breath.

“What, What’s the matter, Kasukabe-san.”

“……I, have a plan. But for that, I would like to ask you for a favor.”

Part 5

—Pumpkin Street. Old recreational plaza.

Jack and Ayesha nodded their heads in satisfaction as they watched over the progress of the game in the open area. This plaza offered no cover for an effective ambush and it was easy for them to escape. And this made the place their exclusive territory. Any brazen plan of waiting for the enemy to appear and chasing them down was never going to work against these two. This is because the spiritual forms of Jack and Ayesha were capable of the skilled technique of utilizing the gates created by Willa to escape to several other possible locations.

But talking about Willa herself, she had gone on a trip to wander around the region outside of the Community's territory and have yet to return. The two members could only feel bewildered by the habitual carefree personality of their leader while enjoying the progress of the Community decreed festival.

"But come to think about it, the time has finally come. Contestants who dare to pick a direct battle with Jack-san."

"Yahoho! That's right! During the initial years that we held this Community decreed festival, there used to be many contestants who would come and challenge me……"

Talking up to that point, his words stopped abruptly. And there was this awkward atmosphere around the two of them that kept them from continuing the conversation.

For any publicly open Game that is hosted by a Community, only the initial attempts would be rather lively. Although this could be said to be a common phenomenon in the world of Little Garden, it was more symbolic for the first attempt in a game of a newly formulated concept with the promise of a Gift. This is fairly symbolic condensation of hopes and believes due to the motivation to break through the trial when there is little to no clues circulating for the other participants and the creativity that is needed to overcome it.

But this Community decreed festival was hosted over twenty times when including this current ongoing event and the participants had

gradually reduced to a few regulars and children who participate for free. The earnings weren't much as well.

Although it might be good to have a change in the game concept, but it would be a disgrace to the Community's pride. As long as a Community launches a Community decreed festival Gift Game, it would be a difficult position for both the host and the participants to back down if there wasn't a single person who could clear the Game.

"Mah, it's not a bad idea to change the game if we win…… but it will just be a little lonely for the host."

"That's right. If the win leads to the promulgation of our Name, it would be an undebatable desire for us…… but it will not bring us any fame to change the Game when it is a win in a Community decreed festival. And the number of people who are willing to participate in our next game would surely be turned off by that."

Then that will an unnecessary spilling of blood that will not give anything in return. Rather than getting a big crowd of participants to challenge their trial, it was their motto to allow a greater number of people to receive their fair share of enjoyment.

And for that purpose, they had decided to extend the invitation to the Community that has the highest possibility of defeating Jack—the [No Name]s, but it turned out to be a burden too heavy for them which they could only smile bitterly about.

"Although that is indeed the case, if we were to be lenient in this round, we would be betraying the participants who have challenged us till date. So we do hope that they will be able to obtain their victory on their own."

"Even if you do say that, that lad hasn't answered our invitation. Is it really going to work out with those girls alone?"

It wasn't a conceited or exaggerated comment but purely factual in observation. Jack believed that he was stronger than those girls and he believed that in a duel with them, they would already be having a hard time catching up to his speed.

If that is the case, they will not have any other strategies to utilize……

"…….Ayesha, here I come!"

“Aie?”

Ayesha gave a cry in her confusion. At the same time, a strong wind struck the both of them. Ayesha held down her twintails in the wind while Jack had his vision obstructed by the billowing tattered cloth that flew up to cover the eyes.

“Wuaah!?”

“You’re open……!”

This time, Yō attacked from the rear with Asuka’s silvery white sword. Sensing the malicious intent that was embedded within the sword, Jack only managed to avoid it at the last moment.

And he reached out a huge white hand to grab Yō as he laughed in admiration.

“Yahohohoho! I didn’t expect you to have such a Gift up your sleeve! But if you had that sort of Gift, you should have used it in the first attempt and it would surely have pierced this pumpkin head of mine!”

“……uu……”

Yō grinded her teeth as she stared at him. But having waited for this opening, Asuka shouted her command.

“Deen, it’s your turn!”

“DEEEEEeeeeeEEEEEEN!!!”

The stretchable metal wrist shot towards Jack from a distance away from the plaza.

That was a strength that possessed the power to shatter Jack’s pumpkin head if it were to land a direct hit. But Jack who leisurely dodged the punch pointed at the combination of the duo as he gave a loud laugh.

“That’s too naive! Too naive, girls. Your control of the game is still too naive! To attack in waves is only meaningful if you have the numbers on your side! With this number of people on your side, it is only a basic tactic to work as a pair you know?!” Laughed Jack at the efforts of the continuous attack that would be of no avail from the two girls and a doll.

But indeed, he did not possess the durability to surpass the strength of Deen's punch. Perhaps a lucky strike might get though and it was best to escape the area.

Jack held Yō as he summoned the flames around them —-

"Now's the time, Asuka!"

In an instant, Yō's whirlwind surrounded Jack.

The flames were unable to condense into their linkage units and were conversely blown away by the winds. And it was then that Jack started to panic in earnest.

"Could, Could it be……!"

"Yes, it is what you are thinking, Jack. You needed the flames to surround yourself to engage in that instantaneous teleportation right?"

This is bad, Jack clicked his tongue in his heart.

From the start of the Game, Jack had disappeared from the people in his escape and those two times were with the common pattern of the precursor conjuring of flames around himself.

The Community of [Will O' Wisp] was one that was based around the demon of 'fire that stems from the borders of life and death'.

Hence it was possible to predict that the requisite for his disappearance would be to summon the fire to cloak himself.

Although that was the case, it was really a crazily thrown together battle plan and Yō was secretly surprised by the success of such a smooth execution but that was no reason for her to miss the opportunity.

Deen who broke through the pumpkin's head under Yō's command had revealed the gem that was hidden within its shell.

"Uu. I won't let you succeed!"

Ayesha flew towards the gen while Yō who was gripped by the hand was slightly slower in her jump. But even though Yō was slower by a beat in the initiation of the action, she utilized the explosive powers of a leopard to leap over Ayesha's head.

And grabbed the Azure gem tightly in her hand.

“Kuu……!”

Yō looked down at the gradually mending body of Jack as she puffed her small chest,

“…….and that’s my win, right?”

To declare her victory to the host of the game.

Part 6

—After the end of the game when it is announced by Jack and Ayesha that the Game ＜CandletheTown＞ is finally cleared, they held a formal ceremony to bestow the prize.

Handing over the letter that would give the [No Name] the rights to the candle lamp, they then announced the end of the game for the other contestants.

“Eh, the event that has lasted for over a span of three years, ＜CandletheTown＞ has finally been graced by the appearance of individuals who will be receiving the special Gift. Hence this game will also come to an end today. If there’s another game that is hosted by the flag of [Will O’ Wisp], we will gladly welcome your support to grace our game next time.”

Jack ended the speech at that and stepped off the stage, to which the crowd gave a loud resounding applause in appreciation.

Having hosted it a total of twenty times, they gathered close to two hundred participants. Although more than half of the participant population were small children who did not need to pay the fee for participation, the rest were normal participants and that was proof enough to attest the support that the game had garnered for itself. And there were the sounds of regret echoing in the crowd of participants.

Having experienced the game hosted by [Will O’ Wisp] for themselves, Yō and Asuka gave a wry smile.

“I guess the essence of Little Garden is the hosting of Gift Games, eh?”

“Mhm…… Someday, I would like to be a host too.”

The duo watched the hosts with envious eyes as the hosts left the stage.

After the ceremony, the tea party organized by [Will O’ Wisp] for the post-game celebrations was started.

The young boys and girls were able to exchange the gems from the captured lanterns for the handmade cakes.

Asuka and Yō who were also welcomed to the party were given a slice of baked apple omelette cake.[3]

Having seen a western cuisine for the first time in her life, Asuka's eyes were shining as she looked at Ayesha warmly.

"This is a really delicious dessert……! The dessert with whipped cream and fruits wedged between the slices of crust, is that a cake of some sort as well?"

"How's that possible? Although the crust of the omelette cake is similar to that of cakes, if it is the crust type of dessert that is used to sandwich other ingredients, it will still be an omelette cake. And besides, Asuka's dish is a baked apple omelette cake while mine's a pumpkin and whipped cream omelette cake."

And just when she said that, the pumpkin and whipped cream omelette cake disappeared from her plate.

For a while, Ayesha was confused by the sudden disappearance of her dessert but upon seeing the chipmunk like food pouches that were the cheeks of Yō, she immediately turned to stare angrily at the culprit.

"……Oi bastard. What's that you have stuffed in your mouth?"

"…… Aie. Shuafs. Puan. Cake."

"Aaaaah! Seriously?! Your rude and dirty personality is so bad that I can't even think of the place to start a tsukomi, you baka!"

Ayesha started to rub that puffed up cheeks forcefully. Although it did make Yō nauseous initially, she utilized all her capability in that cavernous appetite of hers to hold it in and to swallow it down.

Ayesha was stumped for words at that point and could only droop her shoulders. It looks like there won't be anything left of that omelette cake. And Yō who thoroughly cleaned the insides of her mouth of any remaining scrapes of the omelette cake started a conversation with Ayesha,

"Ayesha."

"And now what?"

"The pumpkin and whipped cream omelette cake was really

delicious. And thank you for the invitation that you've sent to us."

"…… Hmph."

Ayesha pouted her lips as she left with her twintails swaying behind her.

Seeing that they were now alone, Asuka asked Yō about the Game details,

"Kasukabe-san. Regarding the things that we said during the game……"

"Mhm? …… You mean the sharing of the trophy of this game?"

Yō started on her own plate of omelette cake as she tilted her head to reply Asuka with a question.

They, who were competing with the number of trophies they could obtain for the game set by their Community, had worked together in the game and it was due to the agreement to share the results for the battle that the alliance was forged.

If they had not won anything in the game, it would have been a waste of effort. Besides, the thought of wanting to win the personal game of their Community was not to be confused with the greater good of an actual win in the Gift Games. Hence Yō had judged it to be efficient to work together in that battle and proposed the alliance…… And Asuka was feeling a sense of apprehension, or rather, she was very taken aback by the enthusiasm shown by Yō in that game.

"Perhaps I'm overthinking this…… but Kasukabe-san, is there a reason behind wanting to win the game no matter what? After all, for Kasukabe-san to propose an alliance with others for a team battle is quite unusual of you."

"…….Well, that is…"

Opening her mouth but closing it soon enough. That was a strange behavior as well.

Yō who was very carefree on normal days would not have taken back her words like that. Saying things when she felt like it and not saying anything when she did not have anything to say was the true Kasukabe Yō.

Worried by the uneasy feeling about this, Asuka leaned closer.

“Kasukabe-san. If there’s something that I can help you with, please tell me and I will gladly help you. So, would you please talk to me?”

“……Mhm”

Yō was troubled about where to begin.

And before she started to talk, Asuka was sitting really straight while waiting for Yō to begin.

Yō’s gaze drifted slightly as she finally gave in with a low mumble.

“……I, would like to contribute to the farmlands.”

“Aie?”

“Well……That farmland is being recovered by the contribution of Izayoi’s water source and Asuka’s help in fertilising the soils, right? So, I was thinking that maybe I could help to secure the saplings…… and then I would be able to proudly lift my chest to say ….. ‘This farmland is the result of the labours from the three of us!’ or something like that.”

And for that end, she wanted to get the extra day that she can to arrive at the Harvest festival to secure the saplings.

Understanding Yō’s thoughts for the first time, Asuka swallowed her breath in her surprise as those words seemed to pack a punch. It was probably due to the unexpected realization that the solitary Yō would consider about such team play.

“……Is that so. I see. So that’s how it is.”

Asuka gazed quietly at Yō who had bent her head at this point.

Asuka understood Yō’s current feelings very well. After all, she had also been fretting about her ability to participate in the higher level Gift Games which would be difficult to secure victory during those times that she had yet to acquire Deen.

‘You shall cast aside your family, friends, possessions, everything in the world of yours.

And come forth to our [Little Garden].’

They who had been summoned over from their respective worlds were undoubtedly expected to fulfil the dream of resurrecting the Community. And if one were to be unable to meet that sort of expectation with a contribution to that goal, it would be the dismissal of one's raison d'etre—that sort of uneasiness was one that she had experience with.

(*I see……So everyone's having that similar sensation of insecurity.*)

Seeming to have realized something, Asuka closed her eyes and gripped Yō's shoulders,

"I understand your feelings, Kasukabe-san. In that case, I will also lend you a hand in this."

"Lend, a hand?"

"That's right! Firstly, for you to get the chance to enter the Harvest Festival eve celebrations a day earlier, I shall give Kasukabe-san the accomplishment of today's battle."

Yō's eyes widen in surprise.

But in the next moment, she anxiously shook her head.

"No, that won't do, Asuka! If we were to use that sort of false testimony, it will be really unfair to Izayoi who is battling alone."

"Ara, I don't see it that way you know? The person who came up with the battle plans, saw through the special characteristics of the opponent and grabbed the gem, weren't they all done by you, Kasukabe-san?"

"That's, That's with a lot of help from Asuka……!"

"Now, now, there's no need to be that modest. And if we are talking about Izayoi-san, it might just be possible for him to achieve this standard of a war trophy you know? It's hard to come by with a war trophy that can be on par with his standard and it would be much a waste to divide it between us."

Asuka waved her hand as she commented jokingly.

Yō had a look that said that she was still skeptical about the ethical part of the agreement but her determination also provided a strong motivation. Seeing that turning down the offer might be a rude act

on her part, she gingerly asked for a reconfirmation.

“….. Is it really, okay?”

“Mhm Mhm. If you feel bad about it, just remember to return the favor next time. Of course, you will have to gift something to Izayoi-san as well.”

“……Mhm, I understand. I will remember to thank Asuka and Izayoi next time.”

Saying that, Yō smiled softly.

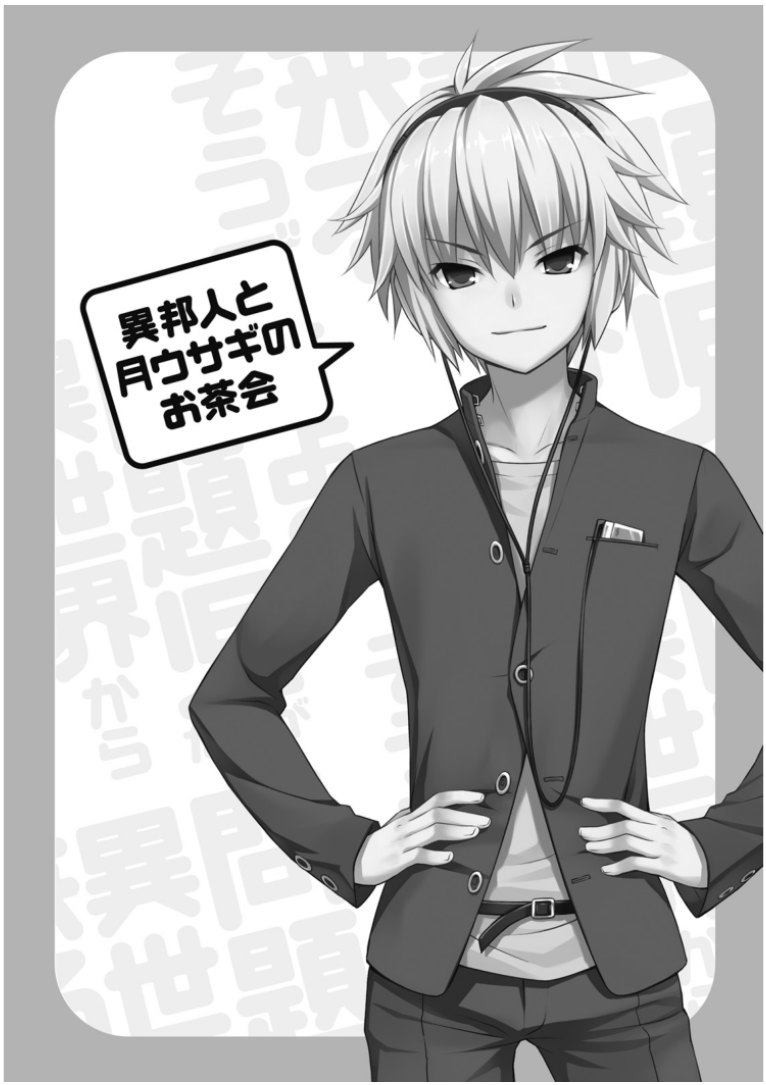
Asuka was also contented by the first true smile of her friend as she guided another spoonful of baked apple omelette cake into her mouth.

The blessed sweetness that spread throughout their mouths relaxed their expressions and the duo exchanged a look with a smile of contentment.

Translator's Notes

1. ↑ [magrefnotes: regarding the thin crescent moon in the sky, the actual translation would have been ‘the moon of the third day of the lunar cycle in the sky’, although it is also pointed out by jorgelotr that it is the same as the pun on Izayoi's name and may have been a double translation error.]
2. ↑ [magrefnotes: The Community decreed festival is so named because it is a festival that is made into a tradition and a law because it has yet to be cleared by the participants of the previous attempts and it is a Game that is specifically hosted by the same Community.]
3. ↑ [magrefnotes: omelette cakes look really delicious. Basically omelettes stacked over each other to form a thick layered cake with fillings between each fried egg sheet. Google it for image. Don't know how to put the link here XD]

Chapter 4 - Kuro Usagi's tea-party with the Outlanders



The vase that held a single sakura tree branch made a thud as it was placed on the surface of the table.

After the celebratory feast of Shiroyasha's farewell party that ran for a continuous span of seven days and nights, the surrounding regions of the [No Name]'s territory were just beginning to return to its

usual peaceful state.

Kuro Usagi closed the closet that housed the costumes prepared for her judging events while sighing heavily in reminiscence.

“Looks like there won’t be a need for this changing room anymore……”

After all, the job of playing judge to games was just another job that she had unwillingly accepted to ensure their survival.

Initially, she had been unable to perform her job well due to her pride. It was inevitable that she, the rabbit who’s renowned to be a [Highborn of Little Garden] would resist to the idea of playing the clown.

But thinking back to those days, it might just have been another of those Trials given by Shiroyasha.

The reality was that Shiroyasha wanted to help the [No Name]s survive during those days when they even had to worry about the securing of the next day’s meal and had contracted Kuro Usagi with a job offer that provided for all excess expenses. Just this job alone was sufficient to supply an income for the livelihood of a hundred and twenty young children to boot.

“Although it was reluctantly accepted at first, Kuro Usagi was still able to persevere until today…… it might not be far from the truth to describe these clothes to be the items which pulled us [No Name]s through those days.”

But now with Shiroyasha having left the lower levels, this changing room would also be of no use.

Besides, no matter what kind of job it was, it did feel lonely to have it end after getting used to it.

“But, wow…… Kuro Usagi, really did wear so many kinds of clothes,” she gently touched the closet after completing her small exclamation.

Although it was embarrassing to wear it before others, it might still be alright to wear them from time to time as a little hobby. After all, these costumes were made with the finest materials and similar to Asuka’s dresses that were tailored for her size, these were also clothes that were sewn by hand.

While searching for her casual wear clothes, there came a light knock at the door.

Tok tok “Kuro Usagi, are you free at the moment”

“Izayoi-san? Mhm, it’s alright.”

Kuro Usagi tilted her usagimimi due to the sudden visit.

But she was in for a second surprise when the door opened. And that’s because Asuka and Yō were carrying a pot of black tea and snacks as they followed behind Izayoi.

“Thanks for the hard work in the farewell party. It must have been tough to follow Shiroyasha around, right?”

“So, you guys have come to reward Kuro Usagi with tea?”

“Mhm. As a reward for you and to hold a tea party at the same time,” Yō picked up a cookie after saying so.

But Kuro Usagi wasn’t perturbed by that point.

Kuro Usagi didn’t expect the problem children trio to be rewarding her for her hard work. And for Kuro Usagi who’s used to being roped into the pace of the trio, this was similar to an unusual phenomenon of having thunder and rain on a sunny day.

Happily waving her usagimimi, Kuro Usagi prepared the tables and chairs for the trio in a flourish.

“Please, take a seat! If you wouldn’t mind this room that is filled with dust from Kuro Usagi's arranging of the closet!”

“It’s filled with dust?”

“Ok, let’s forget it.”

“Yep.”

Drruuuttt! [sound of chairs being pushed back]

“Oi, you guys are really leaving?!”

“How can that be true?”

The trio sat back down as they teased Kuro Usagi.

The snacks that the trio brought with them were cookies with strawberry jam toppings and tea that was brewed from the spices grown in the backyard. In contrast to the attitudes of the problem children, Kuro Usagi allowed herself to be happy as she was touched by their thoughtfulness of preparing this reward.

“Come to think about it, you guys also held a tea party in the past, right?”

“Mhm Mhm. We did hold it once in [Underwood].”

“We decided to allow Kuro Usagi to join in our little gathering this time.”

Kuro Usagi nodded her head as she heard the replies from Asuka and Yō. Moreover, she really wanted to join this sort of tea party.

“Then, without further ado, let’s start it now! The hosting of the second tea party of the Outlanders!”

Waa～, Pa Da Pa Da! The girls started to cheer in synch. [1]

Izayoi was taken aback by the progress of the tea party that was getting closer to the definition of a girl’s party, but he took it as the opportunity for the clarification of the workings of things that were in the world of Little Garden. Picking up a cookie to take a bite, he posed the question offhandedly.

“Then, I shall go first. ---There’s this thing that I’ve been concerned about since a long time ago. Don’t the little brats of [No Name] have to go to school?”

Hearing Izayoi’s question, Kuro Usagi folded her arms over her chest with a Hm～.

“School…… you refer to holding classes right? There used to be such classes held in [No Name] but it is now Kuro Usagi’s task to schedule the days that everyone will gather for her classes.”

“Ara, that’s surprising, Kuro Usagi is the teacher?”

“YES! Although after all that is said, it is just the normal scope of transmitting the morals and values. There are a lot more stuff that is left to the specialized Communities that handle the aspect of education such as the rituals for specific religions.”

“Then, is it at a religious shrine of sorts where they study the religious texts?”

“That’s right. And much effort has been pumped in by the Buddhist faction. The level of their efforts have been so much that it is to the point of “rehabilitating Demon Lords to convert to Buddism”!”

“That sounds good to me. I guess we should try to enroll our polka dotted maid into that curriculum as well, right?” Izayoi commented in jest as the others laughed with him.

If it were able to change her thankless personality that found fault with everything, it might just be a good thing to enter her into Buddhism as well.

“Although it is not a bad suggestion, …… but our basic direction is to train first grade participants (Player) and strategists (Game Controller).”

And this realm of education would be left to the Community’s own judgement and it’s own responsibility.

Izayoi was slightly in awe as he continued, “That means there isn’t any sort of compulsory education here, right? Although it does seem great on the freedom of choice aspect, but is that really going to be helpful for the Communities?”

“YES! Leaving aside the type of Community for now, it is definitely not a problem at all to Communities that possess a first rate Player.”

“Is that so?” Yō shot back a question while between her fierce stuffing of cookies into her mouth.

“All young boys and girls of Little Garden aspire towards the dream of standing on a splendid stage as a first rate Player someday. Moreover, while looking at the backs of the famed individuals, it would generate anxious thoughts like “I want to be that sort of person,” that push them to train themselves. Hence, if every one of us continue to show our current activeness in participating in Games, it will be the best kind of education for them,” Kuro Usagi lifted her head and puffed her chest as she reasserted her stand.

Kuro Usagi perked her Usagimimi sharply with a *Beishi*. [2]

To be active in Gift Games and fluttering one’s Flag in the sky while loudly saying one’s own Name to proclaim victory.

One's name and glory would be embodied by one's own sword and Flag.

That is the sort of glory that would cause the young girls and boys to feel anxious while spurring them on to train themselves.

"…… Hmph. Although it isn't perfect in efficiency, it doesn't feel all that bad."

Izayoi raised his cup to his lips. Although it did sound a little rude for his words to turn out that way, Izayoi did not think that the methods of [No Name] was heading in a wrong direction. Moreover, he couldn't help but think of something at the same time---

The direction of Canaria's education did not change even after arriving in a different world.

On the other hand, Asuka let out a loud and long breath. She then clenched her fists at her chest as an act to motivate herself.

"Then, from tomorrow onwards, we must work harder. We must not let the Senior and Junior groups see ourselves as inferior."

"YES! That's the attitude! --- Okay, now, it's the turn of the Little Garden's side to do the questioning."

Cocking her ears to one side, Kuro Usagi looked at them with deep interest.

After munching on another cookie, she started.

"This is something that has been on Kuro Usagi's mind for a long time. Could it be that the coat that Izayoi-san is wearing ----is the legendary strongest outfit that is known as the "Gakuran"?!!"

Cough, Izayoi chokes on the black tea and the reason was obvious.

It wasn't because Kuro Usagi knew of the Japanese student outfit of the stiff collared school uniform but for the fact that she associated the "strongest outfit" = Gakuran.

And despite Izayoi's desire to deny that assumption, Yō was a step faster as she took hold of the topic.

"Come to think about it, in the old books that dad left behind…… it has always been the teenage boys and girls who wore gakurans who

saved the world in those stories.”

“YES! There was also the appearance of Heroes in the world of Little Garden who wore Gakurans and on three occasions as well! And they called themselves as “Bancho”!”

“Oh, is that so? Then those books must really be writing about some true events then.”

How is that possible? Izayoi made a silent comeback in his heart. [3]

Izayoi had no idea what sort of mistaken or misinterpreted history that was used to summon those individuals but it could also be possible that it’s the workings of some unknown summoner who summoned them over with the intention of making it a prank.

Izayoi gave a wry smile as he started to correct their misconceptions.

“I will say this from the start. The gakuran is a uniform that is used in the 20th century of Japan. The uniform itself does not possess any huge power.”

“Aie? Is that so?”

“Aah and it is already outdated during my generation. The only reason for me to have worn this gakuran is due to the stubbornness of that fellow---Mhm , This topic can end here. ……And Kasukabe, those things that you read are just fictive stories and mangas. They aren’t real.”

“……? I see.”

Although Yō looked a little doubtful as she tilted her head to one side, she did not express any refutation and popped the last cookie into her mouth.

Asuka who was watching from the side muttered in a low voice as she arrived at a conclusion.

“I see. As I expected, the clothes are totally different when it is of a different cultural timeline.

“YES! Especially the Outlandish clothes that Shiroyasha loves as part of her interests. In the end, Kuro Usagi was made to wear many clothes.”

“That really sounds like the style of Shiroyasha.”

“By the way, what kinds of clothes did she make you wear?”

“There were so many that Kuro Usagi has lost count! The combinations of Western and Japanese are needless to say, there are also those corporate uniforms for specific occupations, swimsuits and even suits for males.”

“Using Usagi as a mannequin? What a really envious hobby.”

Kuro Usagi’s eyes were staring at a faraway place at this time and Izayoi was laughing loudly as the matter did not concern him at all.

“…… But those clothes won’t be used for a while. After all, Shiroyasha-sama has gone back.”

Mumbling that in a lonely voice, she then opened the closet.

The clothes that Shiroyasha sent to her weren’t only those in the range of the various COSPLAYs. There were also those splendid looking dresses and clothes that would make Kuro Usagi delighted.

However in the current situation where she did not need to perform her duties a judge, it basically means that she would not have the chance to wear these clothes anymore.

Yō who was silent after munching up the last cookie, suddenly looked at the closet as she seemed to have thought of something.

“…… That closet, also contains suits for males?”

“YES! There are…?”

“I see. --- then, let’s take this last chance to play around shall we?”

Yō gave a slight smile as she cast her gaze towards Izayoi.

Izayoi wiped away his smile and stood up immediately. However, he was a step too late.

Asuka was quicker to grasp the meaning of that gaze,

“Ara, that’s a great suggestion. I’m also curious about this big mannequin,” Asuka joined in with that meaningful gaze at Izayoi.

And then it dawned upon Kuro Usagi.

“Come to think about it, Kuro Usagi still has one authority to command Izayoi-san. ……And this would be the best time to use it.”

Ufufu, Kuro Usagi took out her Gift Card.

Having lost the moment to make his escape, Izayoi gave a loud click of his tongue as he raised his hands in surrender.

“…… I got it. I will just take this as the celebration of Kuro Usagi’s job step-down and allow you girls to play whatever you like.”

Izayoi sat down as he gave them the permission.

It was then that the trio of girls shrieked in delight as they announced,

“Then, let’s change the name of this tea party to ---- the clothes changing game for Izayoi! And without further ado, let’s get started!”

Pa Da Pa Da Pa Da, the females then proceeded to rummage through the closet after their excited clapping.

Giving a sidelong glance at the excited female group in their fun, Izayoi lifted his head to look at the moon while thinking in the depths of his heart.

When Shiroyasha returns ---I will have my revenge.

Chapter 5 - The coin of the Stymphalian birds I & II

Part 1

“『Name of Gift Game: “The Strange Green Copper Birds (Stymphalians)』”-

Participants: Free for all.:

***(But, the danger of death and incapacitation exist for participants.)**

Winning Condition: Bring us feathers of the Stymphalian that are made out of green copper.:

Defeat Condition: When participant is unable to fulfil the above winning condition.:

***(Death counts to defeat.)**

Detailed Rules::

***The Game ends when the quota of green copper has been collected.**

***Prizes will be prepared for those who gather the green copper feathers.**

***All copper and silver feathers gathered by the Participants will have to be handed over to the Host. (those who sneak away with them will be punished.)**

***The Host will bestow the blessing (Gift) according to the copper or silver feathers that are gathered.**

***In the situation that a participant dies, the spiritual power that remains from the dead will be entrusted to the Greek gods.**

Oath: With respect to the above contents, [Kerykeion] pledges to host the Gift Game in its glory and Flag.

“『 Stamp of [Kerykeion] 』"

Part 2

— Outer Gate 727246. Deborah[4] Gorge. A tavern in the valley.

Turning back time to roughly a month prior.

News of a lucrative Gift Game that promised thousands of gold have been spread to the edges of the world of Little Garden. And it was to be held in the South Western region of the valley.

Thus, strong candidates who have heard of the news have gathered in the corner of the tavern. And having been riled up by the excitement of the Game contents in the rumors, the strong candidates were whispering among themselves after their read of the shining sheepskin parchment— the [Geass Roll].

“It says here, Kerykeion. Isn’t that the head of the commerce Community that controls the South Side of Little Garden?”

“And to have the Gods as their backing, it seems likely to be a game with generous rewards.”

“But when we talk about the Stymphalians, it should refer to the strange birds that spit vile poison. A type of Legendary Eudemon that possess green copper feathers capable of deflecting blades with just its hardness.”

“So what if it is strong. [Kerykeion] is still the treasury guardians for the Greek gods. The rewards would definitely be huge.”

“Aah. It might even be possible for someone to be granted Divinity as well. It’s definitely worth the gamble of our lives……!!”

The strong candidates raised their bottles in their excited anticipation and a closer look would tell that the majority of them were non-humans. The possessors of strength, who belonged to various renowned Communities, had their races identifiable with their unique non-human characteristics.

Possessing ferocious looking sharp teeth and wolf ears, the vice leader of [Five Claws], Woldo Focas.

Possessing a body as wide as a tree trunk, the vice leader of [Four Footed], Dork Porfoy.

Besides them, there were also many winged individuals of [Two Wings], were-beasts, faeries and more who gathered within the tavern.

They, a portion of the [DracoGreif] Alliance had their headquarters and territory situated in the huge Tree of [Underwood] and were here to participate in the hunt for the strange birds.

Yes— this is the world of Little Garden where various Gods, spirits and vengeful ghosts gather.

It is another world where gods, who possess absolute great power, would confer their blessings (Gifts) to the Humans, Eudemons and Faeries by the process of a magical game—the [Gift Game].

And in this highly unusual other world, individuals who possess congenital unique abilities, descended from special lineages, or had heroic battle accomplishments would be summoned from the outside world.

There were also a number of humans who summoned over for they possessed the peak of their certain talents.

But these people who possess talents would not join the game in an orderly fashion—

“Bad newwwwsssssss!!!!!”

—Bang! The Tavern echoed with the sound of its door being slammed open. And one of the Participants who had joined the advance party of the Gift Game -“The strange copper green birds (Styphalians)” came charging into the midst of the guests while panting.

This panting guy who was drenched in sweat slumped over a table in his attempt to catch his breath.

The other strong candidates gathered around him in curiosity and the man was thusly at the centre of their attention.

“Oi, Oi. What’s the matter?”

“It can’t be that you guys have captured all the targets already right…..”

Currently, the people in the tavern were the second team on

standby. If the first team were to successfully complete the game, it would mean that this group would have to return without the glory of any accomplishments.

But the guy who having had recovered his breath, shook his head.

"……Appeared….!!"

"What?"

It wasn't like that someone was rebutting his words, but the guy who recovered his breath wore a fearful expression—

"There was the appearance…. The appearance of some incredible brats……!!"

…Wha? The air above the strong candidates' heads were filled with question marks

"We found the Stymphalians at the lake and the advance party were about to prepare for the hunt…… then, there, there came three unbelievably strong brats who attacked us……!"

The male Participant of the advance party shuddered as he the details spilled from his mouth.

After standing in a daze with half opened mouths……the second standby squad at the Tavern,—

Gave off a loud roar of laughter in unison.

Dork Porfoy, Vice leader of [Four Footed], slapped his huge belly, "Oi Oi, did you hear that?! We have come all this way to the edges for the hunt of the strange birds and …… and the advance party was actually wasted by some small brats!"

The tavern was filled with another bout of laughter.

Woldo Focas, Vice leader of [Five Claws], then continued, "Haha, that certainly is the most fortunate thing about the misfortune. Those who can't even handle a couple of brats, would certainly be incapable of beating the Stymphalians anyways!"

The strong players in the tavern hooted in laughter.

After a while when the laughter finally subsided, they stood up to ready their equipment.

"……But that sure is good news. Looks like the advance party is defeated even before their assault on the nests."

"Aah. If they have not startled the flock, it would also mean that there is no need for us to hunt in the mountains. Oi, my men! Set off immediately! The Stymphalians will be ours for the taking!!"

Woooooh! The players cheered as they finished their preparations.

In another corner, a male of the feline race stroked his beard lightly as he watched them with amusement in his eyes.

"……A strong trio of brats who can mess others around, huh?"

The neatly dressed tomcat was clearly out of place in the dirty tavern where the strong players had gathered. A slyness that seemed to be a result of experience similar to the weathering of many sandstorms could be seen in the depths of his gaze. An elderly cat who exuded a different sense when compared to the other strong players around himself.

Accompanying the elderly cat by the side, the female in long robes twitched her Usagimimi which could not be hidden perfectly as she grumbled.

"Uu…… got a bad feeling about this."

"That's right. But let's just ask him about it."

The elderly tom cat and the Usagimimi female walked towards the guy from the advance party.

"Oi, you there. Are those brats…… could it be a trio formed by a lad and two other ladies?"

"Ye, Yeah. The three of them were using completely different types of Gifts…… They were simply monsters……!!"

Aiya, the elderly cat and Usagimimi female supported their foreheads with a hand.

But seemingly in understanding, the elderly cat gestured for the guy of the advance party to sit beside himself.

"That sure is a disaster. Mah, have a drink. It's on me. Feel free to order anything you like."

“Wha…? No, but,”

“There, there. Don’t worry. After all this is a branch shop of [Six Scars]. So there isn’t a tab for me.”

The elderly cat who gave a dry laugh while pouring a cup of wine—Garol Gandach.

The Usagimimi female took this opportunity to pat her robes as she stood up.

“Really sorry about this, Garol-dono. And this is when Kuro Usagi gave them the instruction of “Don’t go overboard with your actions!” too.”

“Oh. I think it should be possible to overtake the party in their progress with your speed. The young urns of this tavern are all family to me, please relay that message to those troublesome brats for me.”

“YES! Understood!”

Taking off the long robes, the Usagimimi-ed young girl who dashed out of the tavern with a trail of dust—was Kuro Usagi.

Knowing that the ones who assaulted the advance party to be a trio of young boy and girls, the reason for the advance party’s demise would be understandable if it were to be the same trio that they had in mind. No, it wasn’t only that. For the second party would surely be defeated as well.

If one were to ask the reason for that conclusion, it would be that they belonged to the [No Name] Community where their goal was to battle the ever spreading disasters of the world of Little Garden—[Demon Lords].

And they are the world strongest problem children group.

Part 3

—Deborah Gorge, bank of the lake at the foothills. Nest of the Stymphalians.

The Stymphalians had built their nests near the bank of the lake and were accustomed to moving in flocks which weren't dependent on any other races for survival.

But within the nest of the strange birds, there were some unnatural shadows that gathered.

"……The second squad is here. Izayoi, Asuka. Get ready to move out."

"Gotcha."

"Kasukabe-san, how many are there in the incoming squad?"

"There's a total of about a hundred and twenty of them and it seems that they have prepared poison arrows for hunting, please be careful." Caution was conveyed through the tone of the young girl.

Hearing that warning, a voice exclaimed in surprise. "What? They actually prepared poison arrows as well? Looks like the second squad is really going all out to hunt the Stymphalians. —Ha, that's fine with us."

The lad was thrilled as he stood up to face the other two girls.

"You two, take your positions. For the completion of <The strange copper green birds>…… we must definitely guard the Stymphalians with our lives."

Part 4

By the time the second squad took to arrive at the lake front of the Stymphalian's nest, it was already well into the wee hours of the night. Lifting their heads to survey the night skies, they basked in the radiance of the full moon's glow.

"With this amount of moonlight, it won't be that difficult for our hunt at all."

Everyone nodded their heads in agreement to Woldo's opinion. But they did not drop their guards. The carnivorous Stymphalians liked to feast on fish and meat and a blunder within close range would surely wipe them out with a breath of its poisonous exhalation.

Hence, there were three ways to attack.

The first would be to attack without any restrains.

The second would be to launch a ranged attack out of the range of its poisonous breath.

And the third would be to "Imitate the legends".

The second squad split into smaller groups according to their realm of expertise while heading directly towards the nest of the Stymphalians.

The werebeasts, who were adapt at surprise attacks were to lead the front to throw their enemies into chaos.

"—Okay. Quick, hide your presences."

A couple of them started to suppress their ferocious intents while muting their footsteps as they walked along the water's edge. And there were others who used the camouflage colours of crawling insects to hide themselves.

Just as the various individuals employed their own methods of stealth— a sudden whirlwind swept through their ranks.

"Wha, what's happening……!?"

A whirlwind that rotated like a hurricane.

Although it was an intense wind that would easily sweep humans off their feet, the werebeast hunters utilised their own unique abilities to stand their grounds with much difficulty.

But that sort of move at that moment was a considerably bad choice.

"—So this level of attack is insufficient to turn you guys back? I see."

"Wha, who's that?" Walking to the front, Woldo bristled his ears while roaring at the voice that sounded like a young girl.

Being a player who have had hundreds of battle experiences, he had been alert for the appearance of the opponent who had defeated the advance party. But he did not believe that his opponent is a mere girl and speculated that it might be some sort of illusory or brainwashing Gift that portrayed the opponent as a young girl.

(*For an actual player to stand in the way of others? That is such a despicable player…… Witness how I tear your disguise apart!*)

Crouching down, he levelled his daggers before him in a combat stance. The spring like curvature of his physique was definitely that of a predatory beast.

The stance was clearly a sign of complete alertness on Woldo's part.

However, upon seeing the young girl's appearance that accompanied the whirlwinds, Woldo was dazed for a moment.

"Sorry, I will not allow you guys to attack the Stymphalians."

Seeming to walk on air, the young girl descended from the skies by whipping up a whirlwind. And what surprised him so was that the source of that power was clearly from that young girl before himself. A fact that would be difficult to stomach in a short time.

Looking to be of an age of fourteen to fifteen, the short-haired young girl announced her name without any change of intonation in her voice while her sleeveless coat fluttered in the winds.

"I'm Yō Kasukabe of [NoName]…… . If you are defeated by me, I hope that you guys will depart from here obediently without the intention to launch another attack on the nest anymore."

“—……”

The male werebeast narrowed his sharp gaze before—casting aside his dagger into the waters to stare at the full moon.

“That’s really surprising. I wasn’t expecting a direct challenge. And here I was thinking that it’s just another despicable player who wants to interfere.”

“……”

“I’m Woldo Focas, Vice Leader of [Five Claws]. —This challenge, I will accept it, ojou-chan!!!” Ending his words with a loud shout, the appearance of Woldo Focas started to undergo an intense transformation. With his eyes upturned to gaze upon the moon, it absorbed the droplets of moonlight that trickled down from above.

His skin started to grow a coat of grey fur while sharp claws replaced fingers and looked capable of rending through boulders.

Capturing the sight of the transformation before herself, Yō muttered in self confirmation.

“A werewolf….. that’s surprising. So he wasn’t a normal werebeast then.”

“Ooh! It’s a spiritual power that has been inherited over seven generations, it isn’t even close to the power of the progenitor—!!”

Having transformed fully to have a wolf head as well, Woldo leaned forward to start his straight dash towards Yō.

And Yō did not take off to the skies, but merely welcomed the direct confrontation.

At the moment when fierce sparks were emitted from both sides—-a sorrowful wail came from the squad that continued their advance into the lair.

Part 5

The squad that climbed to the higher ledge which gave them a clear view of the lake front were suddenly thrown into chaos as they were met with an unexpected attack.

But that was only to be expected.

The destination which was on that higher ledge had a huge shadow that could even block out the glow from the moonlight and the red armored single armed metal giant gave a fearsome roar as it stood in wait for them.

“—DEEEEeeeEEEEN!!”

“WUaaaaaaahhhhhh!!?” The operatives of the second squad issued a series of alarmed cries as they backed away from the thing that they had no idea about.

That was also understandable since there was no forewarning for the sudden appearance of the thirty feet tall metal giant. And it would be rather difficult if we were to expect them to be calm.

Elegantly sitting upon the shoulder of the metal giant, the black haired young girl—Kudou Asuka looked down upon the scattering crowd as she grumbled with dissatisfaction.

“Why are they running? I’ve not done anything yet…… This is not fun at all.” Asuka sighed while supporting her face with a hand.

“Just a mere metal doll, don’t you get all cocky like that!”

Asuka lifted her head sharply to spot a huge boulder flying towards herself.

Asuka raised her hand and issued the command to Deen, “Deen, block!”

“—DEEEEeeeEEEEN!!”

Giving a roar, Deen used its right hand to shatter the boulder. Although Asuka had not understood the situation instantly, she soon got the information she needed from the sight of the person who threw the object.

Her carelessness dispelled, she watched the enemy who stood before her eyes.

“A Giant……!! Where could he have come from……?”

“Haha—!! The technique of therianthropy[5] isn’t only limited to the Eudemons and werebeasts! It is also a necessary skill for one as big as me to live in the human cities as well!”

Dum! Dork Porfoy of the Giant’s race thumped his chest with a fist as he explained. Measuring a height similar to Deen, the muscular arms that were as thick as tree trunks seemed to promise a proportionate amount of crazy strength to match.

Summoning a huge axe from his Gift Card, the male Giant reported his name in a loud voice, “I’m Dork Porfoy, Vice Leader of [Four Footed]. Although I do not know your intent for standing on this high ledge….. but it would be a headache for us if you do not give us passage.”

“Ara, then that’s not a problem. We intended to give you guys that headache by standing here in the first place.”

Hng Hng, Asuka ran her hand through her hair lightly as she gave a laugh.

“I see. Standing there to give us a headache, huh? It might not be a problem for you ojou-san…… but it is a serious problem to us.”

A warrior’s glint could be seen residing in the gaze of Dork and Asuka accepted that gaze directly with a light smile.

“Let’s cut the talk. We have different goals and to plunder and fight with each other in the world is only reasonable in these situations. ”

“I’m Kudou Asuka of [No Name]. This is my comrade Deen. We will block the way of all who try to take this higher ground. So if you are prepare to do that, feel free to come at us at any time!” Clenching her right fist, Asuka reported her name to Dork.

“Ha, that suits me fine!!!”

Heaving the axe to his shoulder, Dork started forward with an earth shattering sound in his wake. And Deen swung its right hand to send the head of the axe flying.

The collision of the super heavy and tall classed players shook the earth and caused the other participants to be shiver in fear.

A huge crater was created on the elevated platform and there were even some players who fell under the crater cracks.

As the single armed metal giant and the warrior of the Giants fought, the collisions caused the surface of the lake's water surface to shake and the moon's reflection to ripple.

Even though the fight had only progressed for a few minutes, the sight of such a fight was already able to capture the hearts and minds of the participants.

And they would soon remember who was it that caused the advance party to run their retreat.

Part 6

— This is just additional information.

What is known to be a Stymphalian is a strange bird recorded in the Greek mythologies. The sixth monster that the Greek Hero Heracles had to face in the “Ten Labors” was the Stymphalian that possessed green copper feathers.

Facing the green copper strange bird that possessed a potent venomous breath, Heracles had also found it to be a tricky situation. But in the end, Heracles arrived at an amazing strategy to deal with them.

That amazing strategy was to “Sound the bronze gongs to create a ruckus, causing the strange bird flock to disperse and to bring them down with poison arrows.”

In other words, it would be a use of “poison against poison”. This is the third method to attack the Stymphalians.

And the task force that was in charge of transporting the bronze gong and the poison arrows to the location were the comrades of the winged Community [Two Wings] who specialised in the tasks of transportation.

Having lost their leader recently, they were passing their days in shame as they lived alongside the other Communities of their Alliance. However, their desire to be the victors of this Gift Game that may bestow a high class Gift wasn’t any lower than the other Communities.

For the sake of regaining their might and for the sake of attracting talents that might be material enough to be their new leader, they had come forth with the determination to weather the Gift Game and to challenge it even if it grinds their bones to smithereens.

—At least,

That is until the instant that Sakamaki Izayoi stood in their way.

“Eeek…..!?”

Boom!! Following the impacts that struck twice and thrice more,

the sounds of explosions echoed around the entire foothill of Deborah's Gorge.

That impact was swifter than the winds of a Griffin and heavier than a fist of a Giant.

The comrades of [Two Wings] who supported the poison arrows were forced to dodge in all directions at a gallop as they waited for the aggressor to appear.

"Who, Who goes there? If you are here to challenge us, at least know your manners of reporting your Community's name while upholding your flag. Show yourself now and report your name!" A male of the winged humanoid type taunted his enemy with an intimidating tone and the explosions subsided thereafter.

And a figure wavered in the moonlight that was obscured by the rising steam of the explosions.

“……Ha, that’s shocking. I didn’t expect my second opponent to be a member of the [Two Wings]. Looks like we both have a mysterious sort of fate together, huh.”

Hahaha The young lad gave a loud laugh as he stood beside the water’s edge while folding his arms before his chest.

The young lad looked the age of seventeen at most.

However, looking at the wreckage of steel parts that were scattered around the young lad and the many participants who were downed by the impacts, it was already enough to give a clear sense of irregularity that resided in the young lad.

[Two Wings] could be said to be famed for its elites within the [DracoGreif] Alliance but they were currently deflated by the strange pressure that exuded from the young lad.

"……Was this the guy who defeated the advance party?"

"Be careful. We don't know what kind of Gift he's hiding."

"Ready the poison arrows. Although it's a pity to use them for things besides our prey, it is still better to be safe."

The members of [Two Wings] notched their bowstrings as they entered their battle stance while eyeing Izayoi's movements.

However, Izayoi only sniffed at them. "Hmph. Looks like you guys of [Two Wings] are all cowards huh?"

"What did you say!?"

"To bring poison arrows, that sort of vulgar stuff, to a hunt and being too scared to use it tactically when the situation calls for it. …… Ha, the Griffit would be much better in that aspect. They would have immediately let loose their arrows."

Izayoi controlled his urge to laugh as he gave a short laugh that sounded very much like *HngHng*. But that only lasted for a moment as he suddenly kept away the smiling face as he stared hard at the members of [Two Wings].

"—This will be your first and last warning. Disappear from my sight immediately or else I will make you all lie here quietly."

"Grr— Everyone, release the arrows!"

The members of [Two Wings] drew their bowstrings and loosened their poison smeared arrows at the same time.

A shower of arrows zipped down towards Izayoi's head. And Izayoi who faced view of a one-sided attack that seemed like a wave-like burial service, gave a fierce grin and launched his sudden attack.

"Ha, Don't get too cocky!"

Following his enraged roar, he swung his fist with the force that could shake the earth and the heavens or even demolish whole mountains and rivers. The pressure of that punch was then made tangible in the visible vibrations of the atmosphere as it repelled the

poison arrows.

And it did not stop there.

The pressure of the punch also created a shockwave that swept across the crowd of [Two Wings] who had been pulling their bows and sent all of them flying.

“That’s, That’s impossible?!”

The members who had been blown away immediately spread their wings to readjust their stances in the air. The winged humanoids and eudemons were basically possessors of the ability for flight even in their therianthropic states. Just being blown away would not be able to inflict fatal wounds to them.

Izayoi also realized that point soon enough as he started to review his plans.

“……Okay, I guess this might be better. Let’s play this long awaited shooting game, shall we?”

“Wha, What?”

“It’s nothing actually. Somehow, it’s just that the hunter has become the hunted and this is the **epitome**
daigo-mi
[6] of the hunt. I think it’s time for you guys to experience it too.”

Saying that, Izayoi immediately plucked a tree from his side with its roots and all. The [Two Wings] crowd had fallen silent from the absurd display of his strange strength as a bad feeling started to take hold of their brains.

“Could, Could it be that he wants……?!”

Izayoi gave a mischievous smile as he placed the tree upon his shoulder, “All of you, just stay there and let me send you flying obediently Ooooooreeeaaaaahhhhhhh!!!!”

—-as he threw it at the speed of the third cosmic velocity.

“That’s…….That’s too illogical already, you bastarrrrrrddddd!!!”

Having sensed the threat, the guy had already taken off in fear as he gave that wail full of despair. Completely different from the pressure of the punch demonstrated earlier, an unusual impact

shook the atmosphere.

This was only to be expected.

Even with their outspread wings, the trees had immediately caught up to them at the speed of the third cosmic velocity.

And the trees were even alight with fire as they combusted from the friction of the high velocities and the flaming splintering masses created a type of interlocking buckshot web. Having created such a situation, it highly unlikely for even the winged beings to dodge from them.

Izayoi was sure that it was his victory as he confirmed the subsequent falling of the figures that looked like swatted mosquitoes in the distance. He then shifted his gaze to look towards the direction of his two other comrades.

"…… Well then. I wonder if things are going well for Kasukabe and Ojou-sama."

Part 7

Bounding across the lakefront of the mountain gorge, Yō and Woldo's fight was one that relied on speed and their numerous vertical and horizontal movements caused the water surface to ripple.

"Your speed isn't too shabby eh?! What a pity that those legs belong to a human!"

"……thanks for the compliment." Yō replied in monotone. The duo who kicked up water sprays as they ran alongside the water's edge only increased their speeds as they engaged in a melee.

Normally speaking, it should have been the victory for Yō Kasukabe who possessed superhuman strength.

But it was a different story tonight.

Absorbing the rays of the full moon, a werewolf would gradually improve in its strength.

"It's just the wrong day for you! If it isn't a full moon today, ojou-san would still have some chance to win right?"

"Uu!!"

Woldo gave a loud howl and the muscles from his gluteus maximus[7] to the knees started to expand.

The next time Woldo runs, it would definitely be one that exceeded his previous maximum speed. Having that sort of premonition, Yō took hold of the necklace before her chest as she chanted.

"[GenomeTree]—Pegasus Forme."

In a flash, the wooden carved necklace was wrapped with a dazzling bright radiance and the materials flowing from the branched carvings took on a solidified state as it wrapped around Yō's legs. The remnants of the radiance then flowed to create a concentration of light particles at Yō's legs…… where the silvery white leg armor which emitted a radiance of its own had appeared.

The light particles that seemed to give an illusion of outspread

wings from the leggings helped Yō to float off the ground as she soared towards Woldo.

Having prepared her wings to run in the skies, Yō bravely confronted her opponent in a melee once more.

“Haha, a direct confrontation?! Ojou-chan, this intensity is quite to my liking! Then I will also put my all……!!!”

Following that, the sounds of the earth creaking could be heard. Woldo had sprung from his location with the strength to destroy his previous foothold and was now approaching Yō with a speed rapid enough to create afterimages.

Yō stared directly at her enemy who shot towards her like a bullet and captured his movements with her eye—

“Got him……!”

Using her right foot to kick down the downward slash of his sharp wicked-looking claws, Yō whipped up a sparking whirlwind from her Pegasus boots to land a spinning kick squarely on Woldo’s chest.

“Gah……!”

Woldo who was winded by the strike to his chest was sent skipping along the water’s surface and blood spurted from his mouth.

Confirming that her opponent was unable to stand again, Yō then raised her right hand with her fingers forming a “V”.

“……Victory,” Yō declared her victory.

Part 8

Continuing with the battle on the high ledge, the intensity of the figure was enough to make one worry about the destruction of the platform from the impacts of their exchanged collisions.

Deen had unexpectedly been able to deftly parry aside the axe with only an arm and Dork was unimaginably agile with the movements of the axe that seem to tell of his mastery in its wielding.

(*Tch…… Having such strength in its wrist even when it is damaged. How strong can this metal doll be, tch!*)

Deen was only using an arm to parry the axe that was wielded by both arms of the opponent. If Deen were to be whole, victory would definitely be determined in an instant.

“Aah, darn it! Who are you people?! Are you really [NoName]?!”

“Ara, that’s really rude. If we wanted to lie to you guys, we would definitely name a famous Community right?”

“Yeah, that’s true!”

After the shower of intense sparks dissipated into the air, both sides drew back some distance. Dork who now saw Deen as a strong foe showed his bitter expression for a moment…… before setting his determination to draw another huge axe from his Gift Card.

“Although I wouldn’t really want to admit it, the battle of wrist powers will not be advantageous for me. So let me use my both arms to attack…… So what’s your decision? If you want to retreat, this will be your chance.”

Dork leveled his sharp gaze at the opponent as he issued the warning. Originally a dual wielder, the attacks with both arms would be much faster and powerful. And that was a common knowledge. Moreover, the use of dual wielding would not be effective against the sturdy armor of Deen.

But regarding this situation, there was an advantage of occupying Deen’s other arm in an instant and taking a swipe at Asuka who was the puppeteer.

If Asuka were to be struck by the battle axe, it would be no laughing matter at all and one strike would surely cleave and mince her to bits. And that was the prediction that led him to give the warning.

Having understood the basis of his warning, Asuka gave a polite bow and spoke up, “I thank you for your kind warning. Those two battle axes are indeed a threat to me.”

“Then,”

“But, that is only if we continue the fight at our current sizes. — Deen, let’s go up.”[8]

With a snap of her fingers, Deen’s body started its gradual increase in size, taking naught but a short time to reach a size sufficient to block out the full moon.

At the height of ninety feet or more and more than double in size, it looked down upon Dork the Giant.

“This…… This is wha……?!”

Even a Giant like him was made to lift his head to see the top of the massive opponent which towered over him. And from the view of Dork, this must be an experience similar to seeing a bolt of lightning on a clear day.[9]

After all, he whose body size would allow him to gaze down on the other races was being gazed down upon by the metal giant who outsized him by three times.

Asuka gave a leisurely grin as she mocked Dork who stood far below.

“Well then, Dork-san. I shall return the same words that you have offered to me earlier. — So what’s your decision? If you want to retreat, this will be your chance.” Asuka returned those words maliciously.

After his gaze travelled from that of his battle axes in his hands to the metal doll before himself for a few times, Dork gave a bitter smile—and shrugged his shoulders in a sign of surrender.

“Sorry, I will choose to surrender. It sure doesn’t look like I’m going to win today.”

“Good. That’s a wise judgement.”

Asuka giggled and looked from the top of Deen in two other locations before getting down to stand before Dork.

“Are you the leader of this squad behind you?”

“That’s right.”

“I would request you to be the representative and come with us for a while.”

“……ah? Where to?”

Dork asked in surprise.

And Asuka leisurely pointed behind herself— “Into the nest of the Stymphalians of course.”

Part 9

—Foothill of the lake at Deborahs Gorge. Deepest recesses of the Stymphalian nests.

A quarter of an hour had passed since the end of the battles from the three teams.

Garol and his subordinates had caught up with the second squad and joined Izayoi and the others.

“Aiya, I’m sorry, really sorry about this! These guys did not join the battle in [Underwood] and hence do not recognize you people.”

“I thought so as well. If they recognized us, our communication would have taken a different route,” Izayoi shrugged his shoulders as he gave a “Yare Yare” sigh.

Garol-dono gave a hearty laugh.

On the other hand, Woldo and Dork had a bitter and complex expression as they listened in on the conversation between the Izayoi and Garol.

“……it must have been rude of us to not know of the faces of the heroes who saved [Underwood].”

“We have only heard a rough sketch of the situation that “there was a group of incredibly strong to the point of absurdity, [NoName]s who brought down a Demon Lord”. Never did we expect it to be you guys. The world may be wide but it sure is a small place I guess.”

Dork gave a dry laugh while Woldo was reflecting on his actions. Having been the ones who fought these two, Asuka and Yō gave a wry smile.

“Mah, not having stated our reasons is also our fault.”

“Mhm. Both sides are in the wrong.”

“It’s great that we can agree on that. Come to think of it, why would you guys do such a thing?”

“That’s…… a special request from Garol-dono,”

“Everyone—! It has hatched!”

Before Yō could complete her words, the voice of Kuro Usagi from the deepest recesses of the nest broke into the conversation.

Not knowing the meaning of those words, Woldo and Dork exchanged a look while Izayoi and the others urged them to move faster.

“The incubation ground is in the cave by the water. We will start to explain from here.

The trio beckoned the others to hasten their steps.

The cave of the lakefront opened up into a cave that was lined with the feathers that have not solidified to their copper state and functioned as an insulated warm space. And there were many beautiful green copper feathered strange birds who were roosting in their own nests as they incubated their eggs.

Yō took a step as she pointed towards them.

“It’s currently the incubation and hatching season for them. The Gift Game can resume after this.”

“After all, this is the period that makes them easy to be targeted by others.” Izayoi supplemented.

And the destination of the group was the nest where the biggest strange bird was roosting in the centre of the incubation cave.

Confirming that it is Izayoi and the others, the strange bird craned it neck to turn its gaze to Yō.

{“Yō, have you brought them?”}

“Mhm. This is Garol-san of [Six Scars], Woldo-san who is the Vice leader of [Five Claws] and Dork-san who is the Vice leader of [Four Footed]. And there are also the members of [Two Wings] whom we have brought with us from the outside.”

{“Is that so? Members of [Two Wings] are also…..”}

The strange bird closed its eyes slowly, seeming at ease.

Not understanding what was going on, Woldo and Dork asked Izayoi and the others in their confusion.

“What’s this about?”

“It isn’t anything too complicated anyways. Just think about it, we have chased off the leader of [Two Wings], Griffith and his faction right? So Garol oji-san requested for us to find a new race for the core of their forces to bolster the ranks of [Two Wings].”

The two vice leaders were suddenly stunned by the revelation.

“wha…… you want the Stymphalians to join the [DracoGreif] Alliance?!”

“Garol-dono, are you serious?!”

“Aah, I’m serious about this. I did have a little fright myself when I heard of the proposal but continued the negotiations with the leader of their side anyways. Actually, to think of it carefully, they are a race of eudemons that are ranked in the higher range of spiritual powers. Why would there anything to be unsatisfied about?!”

“But, they are the strange birds that the Greek gods are planning to annihilate, you know?!”

Izayoi stared at the panicking duo with his sharp gaze.

“You are wrong. This game is ‘to gather a large amount of green coper from the bodies of the Stymphalians’. If you are able to solve the problem peacefully, it would be for the best.”

“That, that’s your own interpretation right?! Isn’t it normal to read it as a genocide for the strange birds,”

—*Bang* Izayoi flung a bronze and silver coin over to them.

He then tossed a handful of green copper feathers and silver feathers into the air as he added.

“Those are the minted copper and silver coins of a faction within the Greek gods, known as [Keykeion]. The coins should have the pictures of the Stymphalians engraved upon them right?”

“Wha, What?!”

“What’s going on? Oi!”

The two vice leaders were shouting in surprise.

Izayoi turned and gestured them to be quiet as he started to narrate the reason.

“[Kerykeion] hosted this game for the materials to mint new coins for themselves and not for any other reason.”

“That, that is…… but, why would they require the feathers of the Stymphalians?”

“Who knows? The following will be my speculations. The elimination of Stymphalian birds is quite famous amongst the Greek mythologies. Hence, the Greek gods have decided to employ the engraving of Stymphalians on their coins to parade that accomplishment.”

“Then, if the copper coins are made from the material of [green copper feathers] from the Stymphalians,”

“The silver coins will also be combination of [green copper feathers] as well.”

Izayoi, Asuka and Yō finished the line for him.

The two vice leaders digested the newly obtained information in their minds while coming to a succinct conclusion.

“Which means to say that this game isn’t with the goal to eliminate the strange birds……?”

“Just handing over the feathers of the strange birds would suffice? All for the purpose of minting new coins?”

“Yes, that’s right. Just hand over the green copper feathers and [Kerykeion] doesn’t care for what method the participants may use to get to that goal.”

“Mhm. So we sought the chief of the Stymphalians for negotiations and this is what he said: {“If it continues to be hosted like this, the games hosted by [Keykeion] might just wipe out our kind. Why not form a contract where we are able to pay green copper feathers in installments to the Communities while obtaining the protection as new comrades of [Two Wings].”}.”

Hearing Yō's final supplement to the narrative, the duo finally understood the point that they were coming from and the reason for the whole series of events that followed.

"I see. This is something that we can also help out with."

"That's right. Although I did say those stuff earlier, but we are always welcoming to strong comrades. After all, we of the [DracoGrief] Alliance are going soon to become the [Floormaster] and for eudemons as strong as you guys, we will not have any objections to that."

The two vice leaders laughed heartily as they made their promise.

With Yō as the translator, the chief of the flock, the mother bird bowed its head in thanks.

{"Thank you. We who have been feared as strange birds will hereby swear to protect the peace as one of the defenders of the region and to fight alongside you guys under the same Flag."}

"…… okay, so Garol-san, that's the end of the request right?"

"Aah, everything is now perfect. The [DracoGreif] Alliance will also be welcoming a more prosperous era after today!"

Garol gave a hearty laugh that wasn't any less as compared to the other two vice leaders as he gave a clap of his hands.

"Oi, call in the guys who have been waiting outside! Tell them that we are going to hold a party to welcome the new main force for the Alliance!" Garol called he took out his Gift Card to bring out a bottle of rum which he placed on the nest.

"Got it!"

Upon receiving the order, his men immediately proceeded to inform the other [Two Wings] members who were waiting outside.

Izayoi, Asuka and Yō exchanged glances as they stole a laugh—

"Although the method is different…… but with the contract of an installment for feathers from the Stymphalians, the game of <<The green copper strange birds>> can be said to be cleared right?"

"Yep. Then, what follows would be the negotiations with Garol-san

about obtaining seventy percent of the rewards.”

“Mhm. We do have that sort of right to make that demand.”

Pa They hi-fived each other for the victory they had gained.

Having fulfilled the request of Garol for <<The green copper strange birds>>, the trio had mischievous smiles as they walked towards the banquet.

Part 10

—Being blessed with the glow of the full moon, the chicks of the Stymphalians were gradually hatching from their shells.

The banquet that was held in blessing for the entrance of their new comrades was also filled with laughter.

And among the noises, there was the sound of a pitiful wail as there was an Usagimimi girl who was being pecked by a newly hatched chick—-Kuro Usagi.

“No, cannot! There are many drunk and wasted adults who are intoxicated by alcohol on the outside! To allow you all who are newly hatched to go out is a big no, no!”

{“I don’t care~! People want to go out, you Oppai Rabbit~!”}

{“If you don’t allow me to go out, I will spit poison okay?! I will be cursing you at the top of my voice you hear?!”}[10]

{“If you don’t want to let us out, at least squeeze some milk out for us, Gu heh heh.”} [11]

“Wait, a moment, spitting poison is that sort of meaning?! And who was the child who made that sort of age inappropriate comment?!”

Uwaa!! Kuro Usagi’s usagimimi stood on ends in anger. But the unruly chicks were completely without the intent to quieten down.

Even if she were a [Moon Rabbit]— sung by bards to be innocent, romantic, good natured and honest, and a race that is symbolic of its selflessness, there was still a limit to the patience.

Kuro Usagi was played around like a nursery teacher and it took her much effort to get the chicks to sleep.

Finally, when all the chicks were sound asleep, Kuro Usagi dropped her Usagimimi in exhaustion.

“Fi, Finally they are asleep. When compared to these chicks, Izayoi-san and the others are still much better to deal with……”

“Ho? Those words, I just cannot let them slide by my ears.”

Eiya?! Kuro Usagi's usagimimi jumped in surprise and as she turned to look behind her, she was faced with a trio of children who were emanating some seriously evil aura as they gazed pointedly at her with those dazzling smiles.

Or perhaps it should be said to be staring.

"Is that so? I guess our pranks are just nothing different from those of newborn kids huh?"

"…… Well then, from today onwards, we must work hard to polish our skills making pranks."

"No, that is not needed. There is no need for it at all!!"

Kuro Usagi took out a folded fan to slap their heads.

Meanwhile, the days for the hair on those usagimimi to drop completely might just be coming close due to the pangs of hunger that she was experiencing.

Having teased Kuro Usagi to the level that they found acceptable, the trio exchanged looks before presenting the food that they brought from the banquet.

"Here's something to reward your efforts."

"We are going back tomorrow, so have something to eat for now."

"But if you don't want to eat, I can…"

"Kasukabe-san, please show some restrain."

Asuka swiftly rebutted Yō's words.

Kuro Usagi's eyes sparkled as she dashed towards them for the meal.

(*It's just as Kuro Usagi thought, they are much gentler than the chicks.*)

Kuro Usagi waved her usagimimi elatedly as she drank the warm and steaming soup.

Izayoi sat by the side chewing a meat jerky as he looked at the skies.

Watching the bright full moon, he whispered, seemingly lost in his

memories.

"……Word of our name is gradually spreading around. Perhaps it's about time to increase the propaganda efforts."

"Hehe, that's right. I also feel that it's time to officially start some activities as a Community."

"Mhm. With that…… we will definitely find the path to recover our Community's lost [Flag] and [Name]."

The trio looked at each other and nodded in affirmation. And Kuro Usagi's eyes were shining with reflected tears as she watched her dependable comrades.

(*Bringing enemy Demon Lords to justice and retrieving our glory…… as long as everyone's here, it will surely succeed.*)

Placing her hands on her chest, she hugged the warmth given to her by her comrades.

Seemingly spurred by that piece of warmth, Kuro Usagi stood up in enthusiasm.

"Okay, here's to everyone for completing the game successfully! Although it might be an overstep of bounds, please allow Kuro Usagi to lead the toast!"

" " "Aiye—" " "

"Okay, then let's, Oi, can't Kuro Usagi do the honors?!"

Kuro Usagi drooped her Usagimimi as she seemed hurt from their reactions.

But the trio immediately exchanged a look as they stole a laugh from the reaction.

"Mah, Kuro Usagi didn't really take much of the spotlight this time. I guess this sort of role can be left to you."

"Yep, this sort of thing is best left with you."

"**Let's go, Kuro Usagi.**""[12]

Following that, the trio raised their cups for the signal. Kuro Usagi immediately raised her Usagimi and raised her cup poised to clink it

with the others.

“Then, let’s have a toast to the prosperity of us [NoName]—”

“ “ “**KanPai!** [13] ” ” ”

“KanPai, Waaah, you guys still didn’t allow Kuro Usagi to say it in the end!!!!”

Kuro Usagi tearfully ran to join the problem children trio as they clinked their glasses.

Bathing in the radiant glow of the full moon.

The hopeful victors have gathered for a celebratory feast that continued into late night as they prayed for a radiant future.

Chapter 7 - Shiroyasha-sensei! Teach me!

Shiroyasha: Fuhahahaha! To the readers who have thought that I have left the storyline for good!

Sucks to be you!

The Demon Lord of the White Night is eternal!

I was feeling lonely because I've left the main plot line for some time, so I took over this section!

Kuro Usagi: YES! The section that will explain the vast and complex world of Little Garden, "Teach Us! Shiroyasha-sensei" will now begin!……. But, is it alright? For you to not return to the Heavenly Realm?

Shiroyasha: Ya~, its like this. Its good that I went back home, but I had nothing to do. So I consulted that Sid***tha dude and he said; "How about a job that leads people to enlightenment?" and suggested this. So that's why I was left to take care of this extra section. Here we'll be explaining the said Little Garden's world, and explain some side plots that were simplified for the convenience of time.

Kuro Usagi: …….Please wait a moment. Than that would mean the one who took over this section is-

Shiroyasha: Oops, thats a story for later. Now lets start!

Q: Gift games and Gifts

Gift Games are games that are only allowed to be played by those who's powers transcend humans.

In Little Garden, it has the same value as normal economic selling/ buying;

……..Well that's what's on the surface.

I'm sure some of you have realized, but this is a big white lie. It's a type of excuse.

The origin of Gift Games turn historical theologies, cultural common senses, and phenomenons into trials, and use these trials to wage representative wars. Depending on the outcome of these representative wars, the outside world's history may change. As Garol Gandack said in volume 5, Gifts are phenomenon that are given during a Paradigm Shift.[14]

Gifts are basically the balancing system of the gods given so that humanity will move in the correct path. The reason why many of the people invited into Little Garden are heroes, famous people, and historically important people is because when the gods tried to recover the Gifts, their users came with it. If Gifts were left as is in the era, it would get messy later on.

Well, once in a blue moon, there are those who are summoned at a completely mundane time. Those exceptions tend to be human shaped, but there are a few that are completely unrelated to the Genomes. According to the records of the Divine Army, those folks called themselves the Cthulhu Mythos.[15]

Mixing various worlds, histories, testing Genome patterns, and collecting them all, as a result, the Little Garden ended up having a unique culture. In other words, the economic use of Gift Games.

Q: Vajra Replica

Kuro Usagi's favorite Vajra that was blessed by Taishakuten[16]. The Vajra is one of the famous armor that represents the buddhist gods, but this one has the power to summon holy lightning due to Taishakuten's blessings. It's a Gift that's easy to use, has a high output, and it's well versed for offense, defense, and speed.

By the way, "Divinity" is a Gift "a Divine Spirit has recognized as a god", and can enforce the Gift, regardless of type/equipment, to its strongest potential. Thats the greatest difference between a Divine Spirit and one that gained Divinity.

Q: Brahmastra Replica

A Divine Spear of absolute victory made by the leader of the 12 Devas, Taishakuten, and the overseer of the 12 Devas, Great god Brahma[17] from Indian lore.

The model for this Gift would be Brahma's Divine Spear. The original spear is similar to the Celtic lore's Broniac, and will always win and defeat its opponent.

The scary part about this spear is that it was blessed "to win", not "to kill". For example, if an opponent had a shield that could not be penetrated no matter what, the spear would twist the world and display a power that would win against that opponent. It's a power made possible for the Great God Brahma whose name means the truth of the universe, but with this much power it touches the realm of authority rather than power.

Kuro Usagi's Divine Spear is only a replica of this, and it doesn't have that much of a cheat function. Instead, it endlessly provides and shoots out the power needed to defeat the opponent it has speared..... MU, I guess that in itself is a cheat.

Q: Chandra Mahal

This is the holy temple that the [Moon Rabbit] from buddhist lore was invited to. The authorities of the moon are divided into 15 parts, and it's a game board type gift that can be summoned by a [Moon Rabbit] with more than one authority of the moon.

Inside there's a barrier maintains similar environmental conditions (gravity, oxygen, etc) as on earth, but the ON and OFF of the barrier is determined by the summoner. If the opponent is a human, Kuro Usagi can use this single Gift to easily defeat them. The authority of the moon isn't for show you know.

Q: Code Unknown.

The cheat Gift that Sakamaki Izayoi uses. Super strong. The end.

.....I guess that's not good. Frankly I have no clue what this gift is.

What I can say though is that it's not the same type or form as other “Candidates of Origin”. Rather, because it's so different, it's counted as a Candidate. If it was the same type, there would be no need to have candidates, after all.

Besides, the “Candidates of Origin” that I know of are all Demi-Celestial spirits of Earth. Please understand how weird a human boy having this Gift is in the first place.

Q: Authority

Cheat Gift #2 that is used by Kudou Asuka.

Unlike the other two, the answers for Kudou Asuka’s gift can be said to be near completely answered. It's said to be a Gift that gives Virtual Divinity, but that’s obviously a power on the side of a provider; a power very similar to “Influence”.

“Influence” refers to a power granted only to the gods. The power of blessings are mostly born from this Gift.

Using the power of Asuka’s version of “Influence” that “strengthens Gifts”, a flame Gift makes Hell Fire, lightning Gift becomes Divine Lightning, and frost Gift will make things fall in temperature to absolute zero. Her power to give Divinity to anything is very similar to the concept of Yaoyorozu [18] of Shinto religion. So there may be a clue in Japanese Lore that will solve the mystery.

Then the question shifts to why did this power reside in Asuka. Let's ponder a bit.

In volume 8, do you remember what Almathea was pondering about?[19]

That was probably because her godly form she originally should have had separated in some shape or form. If this hypothesis is correct, than the “IF” dream that Asuka in volume 2 at the time of VS [Grim Grimoire] becomes suspicious.[20]

—I, Kudou Asuka, should have had sisters. —I ran alongside my dead sisters. —I silently watched myself say “Trick or Treat” as I laughed gleefully with them.

This dream would be the key to solve the mystery that Kudou Asuka carries. The time the answer will be known should not be too far away.

Q; Genome Tree

The cheat Gift #3 used by Kasukabe Yō. At first glance, its hard to tell what the Gift's powers are, but as the story has progressed, we now know a few things.

1. It makes it possible for the user to attain the natural powers of any beast (including Eudaemons and Holy Beasts) 2. Using the powers the user has attained as materials, it is possible to produce a weapon with the powers of a completely different beast. 3. The amount of combinations of the weapons made by said attained materials are unknown. 4. When using a Gift that the user cannot control, all attained powers vanish?

…….Hm, Even when we line them up, it's hard to think these up from just the Gifts ability alone.

This is only speculation, but the reason why Kasukabe Yō was able to weaponize one of the strongest species, "Great Garuda" would be most likely because there is a known parent Divine Spirit. The relationship between Parent and Child, in other words a family tree exists, so Genome Tree can weaponize the Garuda using that condition. In other words, it can't weaponize a beast that doesn't have a family tree that incorporates a different species.

Anyway, the price for using the powers of the Great Garuda being the loss of all attained powers is absurd. Besides, a Gift does not disappear for no good reason. Perhaps, a power besides that of Genome Tree has intervened.

Or perhaps the row of words that appeared inside Kasukabe Yō's head during volume 4 may have a relationship to the true identity of this Gift.

In other words; at this point, we don't understand anything!

Q: Little Garden

Currently its turned into the playground of the Gods, but originally a place created to guide the outer world to the correct progress, in other words a space of Third person view.

In volume 6 Izayoi had said “Little Garden is maldistributed connected to the outer world’s flow of time.” This is an assumption made from the fact that the three problem children were summoned from different time periods and time flows.

But sorry! If it's just that than the assumption is half correct and half wrong.

The thoughts of Sakamaki Izayoi is probably as follows.

Temporarily naming the time period the kids were summoned to be points a, b, and y, in order for them to be summoned at the same time, there needs to be a completely different time flow that can observe all three points a, b, y at the same time.

That's why Izayoi assumed “Little Garden is maldistributed connected to the outer world’s flow of time.”

Well, he isn’t wrong up to there, but he’s still missing something.

For one thing, Divine Spirits can exist because of human religions and history. But these Divine Spirits are the ones that are observing and fine tuning the fate of humanity from an outer world. This creates a question of which actually came first; the humans or gods?

This would be a form of the so called “Bootstrap Paradox”. [21]

If this paradox can be solved, it can uncover the truth of the world of Little Garden……maybe, but this has little to do with the main storyline. [22]

Q: Strongest species

This phrase would refer to the three great species that represent Little Garden.

The ones born as Divine Spirits, pure blooded Dragon species, and Celestial Spirits.

If you want to put ranks of strength, the Celestial Spirit would be at the top, followed by the other two with rivaling strength. This is not

a matter of battle prowess, but rather that Celestial Spirits are born regardless of human civilizations. Of course this includes unknown future worlds as well. So killing a Celestial Spirit completely would mean you'd have to be able to kill an infinitely existing world.

But like demon lord Algol, it is possible to demote a Celestial Spirit to a Divine Spirit, then enslave it. Therefore, it's not always true that Celestial Spirits are superior.

Q: Demon Lords

The disasters of Little Garden. They are the beings who have the ability to forcefully impose a type of Game called [Host Master Authority].

But these [Host Master Authorities] are not all evil in nature, and can also be used for justice. That's why the virtuous gods and apostles give their representatives this privilege, and make them use it to judge evil. If these representatives abuse this, the god's responsible of granting the Authority would have to capture and judge them. These people are commonly referred to as "fallen".

Q: Demon Lord Algol

Known as "Medusa", "Lilith", and various other names.

Her verbal tick is "Al-chan is a super beauty!"

…….Yeah, go die. Thanks to her arrogant personality, I ended up crying many times.

Right now, her spiritual power is greatly weakened because she's become a servant to [Perseus], but her true form is one that can rival Queen Halloween, and is one of the Three Great Problem Children of Little Garden.

Being a variable star, Algol has had great magical capabilities since ancient times, and her roots spread to as far as ancient Mesopotamia. At that time she was hailed as a Mother Earth Goddess, she gradually changed with the changes of culture and advancement of Astrology. She steadily grew away from being a spirit of Earth.

The reason she changed into her form as Celestial Spirit Algol

would be her appearance in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament.

Using this, Algol began to spread various demons and poisonous animals (snakes, spiders, and scorpions) throughout various worlds and ages, and declared war against deities of the Three Thousand Worlds.[23]

After many hardships, she was finally sealed, but the deities of the Old Testament, where the roots of her power came from, refused to look over her because of how much of a pain in the ass she was. She was passed around from place to place until finally the Greek Mythologies took her in. But, Algol decided to agitate Athena, her overseer, by showing off her beauty and hooking up skills, and finally

Algol: “U so ugly~”

Athena: “Ok, I’m buying that fight.”

Thus, both sides began an all out war.

Their fight made many worry that it would develop into a huge war, but Athena’s group gained an advantage in a unusual form.

Algol’s spiritual power had been shrinking because she was taken in by the Greek Cosmology. As a result, while Algol was drunk, she was assassinated/eternally bounded to Perseus. The fight of two women ended on that idiotic note.

By the way, the word Alcohol comes from the name Algol. This comes from the saying that “alcohol is the demon drink that leads men to depravity”.

The reason why the Celestial Spirit of the fluctuating star Argol changed her name into Algol is rumored to be because of the influence of the drunks that worship her, but…….it's also rumored that she’ll get drunk with just a tiny sip of holy wine.

Q: Baron La Croix

A God of Death as well as a God of Love in Haitian Voodoo. Otherwise known as a God of Life. He’s one who understands my

interests, and is a great friend as well as my eternal rival!

He has many names, with the most famous of them being “Goethe”.

He looks like a pitch black shadow wearing a tail suit[24] and a bowler hat, and his entire body is thin and flat. Being a Divine Spirit with profane emotions, his emotions are easily understood.

Well, his true body is not the shadow but rather the hat and suit. The existence of the Divine Spirit known as Goethe is based on how he’s dressed rather than his actual body.

This comes from the fact that when the believers of Voodoo go into ceremonies or political activities, they dress as if to look like Goethe, wearing a tail suit and bowler hat. In this way the Divine Spirit has no actual form, and his suit and hat are the strongest symbol of his existence.

While there are many Divine Spirits, there are few who are capable of being called Sagacious God. How he became known as a demon lord has to do with this slave freedom movement of the outer world…….This little mystery will be solved in the near future of the main story.

Q: Final Trial of Humanity

The title given to the oldest demon lords. It's basically the origin of demon lords and Gift games that make Little Garden so unique.

They are the disasters that suddenly appeared during the time Gods were fighting each other for the fate of humanity. While the Gods war is a trial directly linked to the fate of humanity with the assumption that humanity continues, Final Trials of Humanity are the highest level trials that need to be cleared by humans in order for humans/the world to survive.

It would be easier to understand if I say that they are a manifestation of a [Host Master Authority] itself.

The scary part of those guys would be the fact that they do not need a Geass Scroll to continually activate their Game. So in order to defeat them you would need an incredible amount of knowledge, weird ideas, and the will to defeat the impossible.

Aži Dakāha that's currently attacking [No Name] right now is also

one of them.

But in its case, its motives of action still hasn't left the realm of a Divine Spirit.

What that means, I want you all to understand with your own eyes next volume.

Afterwords

I thank you readers who are holding this comedic style of a different fantasy world novel of ＜＜ Mondaiji-tachi ga Isekai Kara Kuru Sou Desu yo?＞＞ in your hands.

Yes, this is once again a collection of short stories. I'm really sorry about this. Although I do have many things that I want to write, I just can't find the way to pen them down and have retreated to hugging my knees in the corner of the room. Ahem, is this what they call the writers' block……?!

The Alliance Flag arc should have ended earlier. And my inability to complete the story by the schedules have caused trouble to everyone, I'm really sorry for that.

Although I do not know when it will be completed, at least I know that the afterwords of this book is already late for submission. However, I will announce the latest updates on Kadokawa publishing collections or at Twitter of Taro Tatsunoko, so please visit them often.[25]

During the stagnation of Taro Tatsunoko, the web of Fujimishobo has uploaded the circulating ＜Age Premium＞ manga of ＜＜ Mondaiji-tachi ga Isekai Kara Kuru Sou Desu yo? B＞＞ which have been completed!

Thank you Anri Sakano sensei for presenting such an exquisite piece of comic art!

The problem children of the original play are also very happy in their teasing of Kuro Usagi.

The comedic relief portions are also exceptional! It really is an art that can make the blood of mine, a Kansai person, to run in joy.

Together with the publications of ＜Comp-Ace＞, the manga drawn by Rio Nanamomo continues to be churned out. I hope that everyone can support the works in the future as well.

To be able to finish the manuscripts by the allotted deadlines is really great.

With the excess time, one can even go overseas for a tour. Yes,

that's right. Although I cannot say who it is who went to Saint Michael's Mount for a tour, it sure is enviable. It's so enviable that it can make one grind their teeth in envy! This sucks, my brain is only thinking about the views of the seawater that covers the streets! I also want to go to the water city of Venice too!

Okay, after all, I did finish my work before the deadline and I can also raise my head and chest in pride.

The next volume will be entering into the climax.

Please look forward to the return of Kuro Usagi and the Problem Children in the world of Little Garden.

Taro Tatsunoko

Translator's Notes

1. ↑ [magrefnotes: Pa Da Pa Da will be the sounds of clapping.]
2. ↑ [magrefnotes: going to use Beishi as the sound effect for Kuro Usagi's ears. Can't remember what I used in the past.]
3. ↑ [magrefnotes: I just saw the word from some other translation and yeah, English form of tsukkomi is called comeback. Just checked dictionary.reference.com. It says "a clever or effective retort".]
4. ↑ [magrefnotes, Note: Deborah (Hebrew for honey), a person mentioned in the Bible, the fourth judge in ancient Hebrew and the only female judge.]
5. ↑ [magrefnotes: therianthropy is the ability to shapeshift from human to beast or vice versa.]
6. ↑ [magrefnotes: 醍醐味,daigo-mi is used in Jap language as a figurative speech for best/ epitome as clarified and suggested by jorgelotr. :)]
7. ↑ [magrefnotes: that muscle group would make up the thigh muscles]
8. ↑ [magrefnotes: It is either "let's go up"/ "let's get on with it"/ "Ascend"/ "it's our turn". Not that it looks all too important to me now, but just giving the various interpretations in case I see a need to change it in the future. If and only if they reference to this event in the later volumes.]
9. ↑ [magrefnotes: I used the direct translation of "seeing a bolt of lightning on a clear day" an English equivalent that I can think of at the moment is "once in a blue moon".]
10. ↑ [magrefnotes: Note from author: the words of spit poison and cursing someone is a pun. Although it can be seen as the literal sense of spitting poison, it can also mean that the person is about to say some vile stuff.]
11. ↑ [magrefnotes: note from ch translator: this is obviously a certain type of slang in the laugh of Gu heh heh….]
12. ↑ [magrefnotes: bolded to show that it was in English from the original text.
13. ↑ [magrefnotes: Bottoms up in English but I guess I wanted to instill that Japanese feel to the translations.]
14. ↑ This occurred in Volume 5, Chapter 6.
15. ↑ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cthulhu_Mythos
16. ↑ Otherwise known as Indra in Sanskrit. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Aakra_(Buddhism)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indra
17. ↑ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahma
18. ↑ Translates as “the 8 million gods”, the expression implying the ever increase amount of gods. In Shinto religion, anything can become a god/youkai (the only distinction between the two is if they are worshipped or not) given the right conditions.
19. ↑ Volume 8, Chapter 3.
20. ↑ Volume 2, Epilogue.
21. ↑ The most famous example of this paradox would be "Which came first; the chicken or the egg?". For further reading, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bootstrap_paradox
22. ↑ In other words, using this paradox, Little Garden can observe multiple time periods.
23. ↑ This means the Buddhist deities.
24. ↑ This type of suit -> http://www.moss.co.uk/images/original/963112115_01.jpg
25. ↑ [Note of ch translator Red lily: On the day that this book went on sale, the author specially dropped this comment: “This volume does not have any preview into the next volume due to a certain useless god, so I will do the announcement, the next volume will be “Games! Games!! Games!!!”]

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